

CYCLORAMA BUILDING
(Gettysburg National Military Park Visitor Center)
(Cyclorama Center)
(Abraham Lincoln Memorial Museum)
Gettysburg National Military Park
125 Taneytown Road
Gettysburg vicinity
Adams County
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-6709
PA-6709

PHOTOGRAPHS

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FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CYCLORAMA BUILDING

HABS No. PA-6709

Location: 125 Taneytown Road, Gettysburg vicinity, Adams County, Pennsylvania

Present Owner: U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Present Occupant: Gettysburg National Military Park

Present Use: Park offices, bookstore, and interpretative activities, including display of the Cyclorama painting.

Significance: The Gettysburg Cyclorama Building was one of a handful of high profile new visitor centers designed by famous architects as part of the larger Mission 66 initiative. Mission 66 was a National Park Service-wide effort to upgrade park visitor facilities and provide more professional interpretation for growing crowds of visitors. The program lasted from roughly 1956 to 1966, culminating at the 50th anniversary of NPS. Ever since the immediate post-Civil War years, private and government organizations struggled to simultaneously preserve and provide access to the important battlefield and commemorative landscape at Gettysburg. The Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association (GBMA), a private organization, presided over the preservation of Gettysburg battlefield from 1863 to until the War Department took over management in 1895. Management of the Gettysburg National Military Park, including the preserved sections of the battlefield and National Cemetery where President Abraham Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address, was transferred from the War Department to National Park Service in 1933. The 1959-62 Cyclorama Building provided Gettysburg National Military Park with its first modern visitor center and purpose-built administration building. This structure also represents a key example in the development of the visitor center as a building type.

Internationally-known Modernist architect Richard Neutra, with partner Robert Alexander, designed a dramatic mid-century Modern structure of reinforced concrete, glass, and aluminum accented with native fieldstone. The building's signature rotunda, or drum, was inspired by the need to display French artist Paul Dominique Philippoteaux's famous nineteenth century cyclorama depicting the highpoint of the battle, Pickett's Charge on July 3, 1863. The mainstream embrace of Modernism in the 1950s and

1960s provided an opportunity for Neutra to display his mature architectural ideas in an important public building.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1959-62 (See Appendix I for construction timeline)
2. Architect: Neutra and Alexander (Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander), Los Angeles, California
3. Consulting/supervising architects and engineers:
National Park Service: John Cabot, Donald Nutt (Eastern Office of Design and Construction, Philadelphia); David Smith (Project Supervisor)
Neutra and Alexander: Dion Neutra (Supervising Architect); Thaddeus Longstreth (Supervising Architect); Parker, Zehnder & Associates (Structural Engineers); Boris Lemos (Mechanical Engineer); Earl Holmberg and Associates (Electrical Engineers)
4. Original and subsequent uses:
1962-1974: Gettysburg National Military Park Visitor Center and administrative offices
1974-present: Gettysburg National Military Park offices and interpretation
5. Contractors:
General Contractor: Orndorff Construction, Camp Hill/New Cumberland, Pennsylvania
Plumbing Contractor: Hirsch-Arkin-Pineherst, Inc., Philadelphia, PA
Electrical Contractor: Keystone Engineering Corporation
HVAC Contractor: Yorkaire Cooling and Heating
6. Original plans and construction: The original construction drawings and specifications for the Cyclorama Building are dated June 1, 1959.¹ These plans represented several revisions of the original design proposal from April 28, 1958.² The 1959 drawings and numerous early photographs indicate that the original exterior form and many of the interior features of the Cyclorama Building are unchanged. Defining features such as the concrete rotunda housing the Cyclorama painting, long rectangular office wing, and exterior ramps leading to a battlefield overlook were all part of the building's original construction.

¹Several diazo print copies of the original drawing set are in the Gettysburg National Military Park (hereafter GNMP) archives and were referred to extensively for the HABS documentation. This set includes architectural, structural, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical drawings (See Cyclorama Maps and Drawings Collection, Neutra and Alexander drawing sets, [uncataloged]). The specifications and detail drawings are also located in the GNMP Archives (See Folder 1, Box 1, Series I: Superintendent's Records, GETT 41097 - Cyclorama Building Records, 1957-1967 (hereafter GETT 41097)).

²An original copy of the proposal with a series of small scale renderings and plans, is available in the GNMP archives [uncataloged]. A reduced photocopy of the proposal can be found in the Richard Segar Research Files, Box 1, GNMP archives.

7. Alterations and additions: The main alterations to the Cyclorama Building involve expanding the unexcavated south end of the ground floor into a storage area and fallout shelter in 1962, a change planned and executed even before the building was dedicated that November.³ Another architectural change involved redoing the roof and Cyclorama gallery ceiling hanging system in 1978. The rooftop pools were discontinued around this time. The employee lounge at the south side of the rotunda exhibit area was converted into a vault for display of the Gettysburg Address in 1979. No longer in use (since 1994), the vault has brown carpeted walls and floor, is lit by aluminum wall sconces, and has a glass display case near the west wall.

Other changes include reconfiguration of the first floor lobby/information desk. Originally most of the lobby area was open with a small seating area near the northeast corner. An information counter was located directly to the left upon entry and a small office with built-in storage cabinets was behind the counter. A screen with opaque glass blocked the view of the office from the counter and access to this space was through a doorway in the hall near the restrooms. By c. 1970 this area was converted into a "Sales Center," or small bookstore, with a counter along the west wall of the former office space. The doorway to the former office still extant but no longer in use. It is currently blocked by a display case. To aid the increased flow of visitors, the information desk is now moved away from the entrance to the west wall of the lobby. The rest of the space has been converted into a bookshop.⁴ Also a drywall partition has been added to the projection room to create an office on the west side of that space (c. 1986). The ticket window at the base of the Cyclorama ramp is no longer in use, but still extant. The ground level reflecting pool was removed in 1989.⁵

B. Historical Context:

1. Introduction

When the visitor center at Gettysburg National Military Park opened in 1962, it represented both the resolution of a long-standing need for a new purpose-built facility for the Cyclorama painting and the expanding interpretative duties of the park staff. It was also a noteworthy example of the collaboration between the National Park Service and a famous private sector architect in developing the visitor center building type during the Mission 66

³Memorandum, EODC Chief Architect Robert Smith to GNMP Superintendent James Myers, (15 May 1962), Folder 13, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

⁴For the original configuration of the information desk see Drawings D-36 Information Counter - Office Plan and Details, D-37 Information Counter - Office Rear Elevation and Details, and D-38 Information Counter - Office Section and Details, June 1, 1959; Photograph SF-26S-028, Cyclorama Center lobby on 1st floor, 1962, Box 28, and Photograph SF-29V-1035, Visitors in Lobby 1965, Box 108, General Historical Photographic Prints, GNMP Archives. The 1965 view shows a portable counter/display case placed near the west wall and ceiling mounted aluminum letters - INFORMATION - over the original counter. See Photograph SF-26S-034 and SF-26S-154 for c. 1970 views of the Sales Center, Box 28, General Historical Photographic Prints, GNMP Archives.

⁵Typescript, "Cyclorama Building Maintenance History," (14 April 1999), Richard Segars Research Files, GNMP Archives.

initiative. A few years after the Cyclorama Building was complete, it was featured in a *Washington Post* article by architecture critic Wolf Von Eckhardt titled “The Park Service Dares to Build Well.” Von Eckhardt praised the “quietly monumental but entirely unsentimental” building as “one of several outstanding contemporary buildings by outstanding modern architects the National Park Service has constructed.”⁶ Internationally-known Modernist architect Richard Neutra, with partner Robert Alexander, designed a dramatic mid-century Modern structure of reinforced concrete, glass, and aluminum accented with native fieldstone. The building’s signature rotunda, or drum, was inspired by the need to display French artist Paul Philippoteaux’s famous nineteenth century cyclorama painting depicting the highpoint of the battle, Pickett’s Charge on July 3, 1863. The Cyclorama Building also signified the struggle to balance visitor use and preservation throughout the history of the Gettysburg battlefield, a struggle that continues to the present. Located on the edge of Ziegler’s Grove at the former location of the Union line, the Cyclorama Building provided access and interpretation of the battle from the same point of view as the nineteenth-century painting.

The Battle of Gettysburg on July 1, 2, and 3, 1863 is widely recognized as the turning point of the American Civil War. The Union Army of the Potomac, led by General George Gordon Meade, stopped the advance of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, led by General Robert E. Lee, into northern territory. The forward momentum of the Confederates, fueled by months of success on the battlefield, was halted and the Southern army would never again venture that far into the North. Vicious fighting all around and in the town of Gettysburg resulted in enormous casualties. “Pickett’s Charge” was the climax of the battle - a bold, but unsuccessful attempt by the Confederates to break the Union line after an advance across the mile of open farm land to Cemetery Ridge from the Confederate line on Seminary Ridge. The charge ended in hand-to-hand combat at the Copse of Trees, the “Bloody Angle” formed here by fences and stone walls came to represent the “high water mark of the Confederacy,” a key landmark in the story of the Battle of Gettysburg.⁷

Cemetery Ridge took its name from the existing Citizens’ Evergreen Cemetery, but now also includes Gettysburg Solider’s National Cemetery. The National Cemetery was established shortly after the battle to properly inter the thousands of fallen soldiers hastily buried on the battlefield. The national cemetery was located directly adjacent to Evergreen, now just across Taneytown Road from the current visitor center at the north edge of Ziegler’s Grove. Within weeks of the battle, landscape architect and horticulturalist William Saunders was commissioned to design a naturalistic landscape for the cemetery, a project completed in 1872. The cemetery was dedicated on November 19, 1863, providing the occasion for President Abraham Lincoln’s

⁶Wolf Von Eckardt, “The Park Service Dares to Build Well,” *Washington Post* (29 March 1964): G6.

⁷Recent scholarship suggests that the military importance of the Copse of Trees may have been inflated by the influential post-battle scholarship of Colonel John Bachelder. The entire Union line experienced heavy fighting, including the soldiers near Ziegler’s Grove. See Richard Segars and Kathy Harrison, “Gettysburg Visitor Center and Cyclorama Building,” Adams County, Pennsylvania. National Register of Historic Places, Determination of Eligibility Form, 25. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C..

famous Gettysburg Address. Lincoln's brief speech ended with the words, "that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth." This speech helped establish the importance of the Battle of Gettysburg and emphasized the heroic efforts of the Army of the Potomac to preserve the Union. The wartime events had transformed the fertile farmland and rolling hills of this Pennsylvania valley into a nationally-important historic landscape.

The Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association (GBMA), a private organization, presided over the first stage in the preservation of the Gettysburg battlefield. Initially under the direction of a group of local citizens (1863 to 1870s) and then Union veterans (1880 to 1895), GBMA focused on acquiring land and erecting monuments at key battlefield sites. In 1881, GBMA acquired property along Cemetery Ridge to create Hancock Avenue, a carriage road designed for battlefield tours. The Ziegler's Grove area had been denuded of trees since the battle; the GBMA attempted to plant maples to recreate the grove in 1888, but only a few survived. The battle's most prolific early historian, John E. Bachelder, worked throughout these decades researching the battle and interpreting its significance for visitors through his guidebooks and tours. Both veterans and curious civilians visited Gettysburg in droves in order to experience the setting of a defining moment in American history. Commemorative efforts largely focused on the Union lines and the sacrifices of Northern soldiers. However, in the immediate post-war decades some effort was made to gather information from Southern officers about troop positions and movements as an aid to battlefield interpretation.⁸

Following an Act of Congress passed on February 11, 1895, the U. S. Government acquired the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association's property and created Gettysburg National Park. Federal control of the GBMA acquisitions was preceded by several years of efforts to enlist government aid in expanding battlefield preservation beyond the positions held by state volunteer regiments to those of regular Union army units, and the Confederate positions on Seminary Ridge. Transfer to the War Department also followed nearly a decade of controversy regarding the Gettysburg Electric Railway Company's plans to run a commercial railroad through the battlefield. GBMA vigorously fought this scheme, launching a battle which united both Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and Confederate veterans in concern for the commemorative battlefield park. In 1896 the Supreme Court ruled that the federal government had the right condemn private land for the preservation of nationally significant historic sites and buildings, creating a landmark precedent in the development of historic preservation law. This ruling further validated the actions of the Gettysburg National Park Commission, created by the War Department in 1893 and charged entirely with management of the battlefield park in 1895. The transfer of GBMA property included more than 500 acres of land, 17 miles of unimproved avenues, and 320 monuments. The Gettysburg National Park Commission now moved to

⁸Segars and Harrison, 29; Amanda Holmes. U. S. Department of the Interior, Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), No. PA-485, "Gettysburg National Military Park Tour Roads," 1998, 45-46. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C..

develop the portion of the battlefield park that included the Confederate positions and modernize the GBMA-era avenues. "Completing" the battlefield park before the fiftieth anniversary in 1913 was of particular interest and resulted in an initial outpouring of funding and other resources.⁹

A portion of these improvements focused on the key battlefield area near Ziegler's Grove and the National Cemetery. Hancock Avenue was repaved, new signs put in place, and trees replanted in Ziegler's Grove (1897). A seventy-five-foot tall steel and wrought iron observation tower was placed in Ziegler's Grove in 1896, the fifth such structure on the battlefield. All of these efforts served to improve the tourism infrastructure at the Gettysburg National Park, with the goal of easing circulation and enhancing understanding of the historic and commemorative landscape. During the 1920s, maintenance projects focused on adapting the park infrastructure to the increasing number of visitors in automobiles. The opening the Lincoln Highway (now U.S. Route 30) through Gettysburg in 1913 was a major cause of increased battlefield automobile touring.¹⁰

With Executive Order 6166, signed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933, management of the Gettysburg National Military Park, including the preserved sections of the battlefield and the National Cemetery, was transferred from the War Department to the Department of the Interior. All of the national military parks, battlefield sites and national monuments administered by the Secretary of War's appointed representatives, twenty-eight sites total, were thus given to the National Park Service. Horace Albright and other Park Service officials had been promoting this idea nearly since the founding of the NPS in 1916, largely because of what they perceived as a lack of educational and recreational opportunities for the average visitor. However the National Park Service had only recently begun to develop policies and procedures for administering historical areas. The addition of Gettysburg and the other national military parks and sites dramatically increased the need to address issues of interpreting and maintaining historic sites for the public.¹¹

Initially the National Park Service had little funding for increased activities at

⁹Harlan D. Unrau, *Administrative History: Gettysburg National Military Park and Gettysburg National Cemetery, Pennsylvania* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1991), 67, 87; Holmes 78-79; John M. Vanderslice, *Gettysburg: Then and Now* (New York: G.W. Dillingham Co., 1899), 398-399, cited in Segars and Harrison. The three member commission, appointed by the Secretary of War, included a Northern and Southern Battle of Gettysburg veteran, and a civilian. The first civilian commissioner was long-time battle historian John B. Bachelder. Ronald F. Lee, *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, Office of Park Historic Preservation, 1973), on-line version - Section III. The First Battlefield Parks, 1890-1899 - Gettysburg National Park. The name was informally changed to Gettysburg National Military Park by the commissioners in 1909.

¹⁰Unrau, 91; Segars and Harrison, 36; Holmes, 111-112, 128.

¹¹Lee, IV. Later Evolution of the National Military Park Idea, 1900-1933 - New National Military Parks and Battlefield Sites, 2; Unrau, 139, 140-141, 144-145.

Gettysburg. With the help of various New Deal emergency conservation work funds, Civilian Conservation Corps crews, and the Bureau of Public Roads, the NPS maintained the existing infrastructure of avenues, monuments, and observation towers. Civil Works Administration funds also supported preparation of maps, lectures, and other historical materials. The system of licensed battlefield guides, instituted in 1915, continued to supplement the limited interpretative resources of the Park Service. Additional improvements such as new comfort stations, restoration of historic farmhouses, road reconstruction, parking lot construction, and the first comprehensive traffic and attendance study were sponsored by the Public Works Administration and Works Progress Administration. The administrative offices of the park, like the War Department commission before it, were located in the downtown Gettysburg Post Office. A small park information center was also located there. Transfer to National Park Service control had resulted in new research and efforts to improve the visitor experience at the battlefield, but these efforts were hampered by the lack of a centralized NPS presence within the boundaries of the park.¹²

Numerous commercial enterprises, in addition to the guide service, operated in Gettysburg in order to capitalize on battlefield tourism. A key example was the Cyclorama painting display located along Baltimore Avenue near the National Cemetery since 1913. The circular panoramic painting depicting Pickett's Charge on July 3, 1863 had been completed by French artist Paul Dominique Philippoteaux in 1884. A popular form of entertainment in the late nineteenth century, cyclorama paintings depicting dramatic historical events toured various cities and impressed viewers with their massive scale and verisimilitude. Philippoteaux, working with a large group of assistants, visited Gettysburg and studied photographs of the landscape to recreate the historic scene. The second of four Gettysburg cycloramas done by the artist, this painting was exhibited in Boston, Newark, New York City, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.. After sitting in storage for a number of years, it was brought to Gettysburg for the fiftieth anniversary of the battle in 1913 and displayed in a silo-like structure constructed of hollow-tile block masonry (Figure 1).¹³

After lengthy negotiations, the National Park Service acquired the painting in July 1941. The painting was designated a National Historic Object in 1944 by the Secretary of the Interior. The Park Service continued to exhibit the painting in the North Cemetery Hill structure through a lease agreement while plans for a new facility were discussed. One planning memorandum described the ultimate goal as an "interpretative center". . . "to be a permanent building which will provide the necessary educational facilities, library, technicians offices, laboratory, and

¹²Unrau, 154-155, 193, 158-163; Segars and Harrison, 39.

¹³For a brief account of the National Park Service's acquisition of the Cyclorama see Unrau, 209-211. Section 106 Case Report, Cyclorama Painting *Battle of Gettysburg*, Cyclorama Building, Gettysburg National Military Park, revised 18 February 1999.

auditorium. Part of the building to house the properly displayed Cyclorama.”¹⁴ Gettysburg National Military Park would have to wait for a new purpose-built facility due to wartime funding and personnel restrictions. GNMP did plan restoration projects at the Peach Orchard, Meade’s Headquarters, and other battlefield landmarks and offer new interpretative programs. Some cleaning and preservation work on the painting was undertaken during the late-1940s, with the continued hope for a new modern building for its display.¹⁵

2. *Mission 66*

The deferred maintenance and other needs at GNMP were indicative of larger problems within the National Park Service by the post-World War II period. Growing number of visitors, most traveling by automobile, created a crisis in the National Park Service regarding the proper care of important natural and historical places and meaningful access by the public. These problems became widely known through personal experiences and the popular media, particularly *Harper’s* columnist Bernard DeVoto. For example, a 1955 *Reader’s Digest* article titled “The Shocking Truth About Our National Parks,” sought to rally public opinion about the problem:

The crisis in our national parks has been building up since World War II. The number of visitors has more than doubled in the last decade, yet the NPS is attempting to care for them with 20 percent less manpower than in 1941, when it had 18 fewer areas to administer. It is now trying to squeeze 50 million persons a year into facilities which in 1932 were designed to care for three and a half million and haven’t been materially expanded since.¹⁶

While the *Reader’s Digest* article mainly discussed overcrowding at the major Western parks such as Yellowstone and Yosemite, the military parks in the East clearly suffered from the same strain due to popularity, with Gettysburg primary among these.

In order to address these problems, in 1955 NPS Director Conrad Wirth began planning the major capital improvement initiative that became known as Mission 66. Mission 66 was a ten-year plan with the dual goal of “improving the protection of the parks, and of enhancing the effectiveness of providing the services which the visitor has the right to expect.”¹⁷ Wirth established a steering committee and a staff committee based in Washington, D.C. to compile

¹⁴Superintendent McConaghie to Director Cammerer, National Park Service, (19 March 1940), WASO Park Archives, cited in Unrau, 210.

¹⁵Unrau, 246, 221-222, 247; See also Walter J. Nitkiewicz, “Treatment of the Gettysburg Cyclorama,” *Studies in Conservation* 10:3 (August 1965): 91.

¹⁶Charles Stevenson, “The Shocking Truth About Our National Parks,” *Readers’ Digest* (January 1955): 46.

¹⁷National Park Service, *Mission 66: To Provide Adequate Protection and Development of the National Park System for Human Use* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1956), 9.

information about the needs of the parks and coordinate the improvement efforts on a national basis. Wirth later explained that he thought Congress would respond more favorably to a long-term comprehensive plan than incremental increases in annual appropriations, because parks in every district would receive attention under the plan.¹⁸ The year 1966 was also significant as the fiftieth anniversary of NPS. A promotional booklet entitled *Our Heritage* explained the importance of the program to the general public:

The objective is to give the American people on this golden anniversary a park system adequate in all ways necessary for their enjoyment and inspiration - a park system so developed, managed and used that our children and our children's children will enjoy the values of this, their estate.¹⁹

Charts illustrated the projected total cost of the program as over \$310 million in operational funds and \$476 in capital improvements, in order to prepare the park for the 30 million increase in visitors expected between 1955 (50 million) and 1966 (80 million).

After a year of preliminary studies, the program was presented to President Dwight D. Eisenhower at a cabinet meeting on January 27, 1956 and gained almost immediate approval.²⁰ Congress approved the first year of funding for fiscal year 1957. The Mission 66 steering committee set forth an eight-point program for the general goals of the program:

1. Provide additional accommodations and related services of types adapted to modern recreational needs, through greater participation of private enterprise within and near the parks.
2. Provide the government-operated facilities needed to serve the public, to protect the park resources, and to maintain the physical plant.
3. Provide the services which will make the parks more usable, more enjoyable, and more meaningful, and thereby improve the protection of the parks through visitor cooperation.
4. Provide operating funds and field staff required to manage the areas, protect the resources, and provide a high standard of maintenance for all developments.
5. Provide adequate living quarters for the field employees of the Service.

¹⁸Conrad Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 239.

¹⁹National Park Service, *Our Heritage: A Plan for Its Protection and Use* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1956).

²⁰Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and People*, 254.

6. Acquire lands within the parks and such other lands as are necessary for protection or use, acquire the water rights needed to insure adequate water supplies, and extinguish grazing rights and other competing uses.
7. Institute a coordinated nation-wide recreation plan to produce a system of recreational developments by each level of government, Federal, State, and local, each bearing its proper share of the expanding recreational load.
8. Provide for the protection and preservation of the wilderness areas within the National Park System and encourage their appreciation and enjoyment in ways that will leave them unimpaired.²¹

The overarching purpose of the entire program was to revamp the system according to modern ideals of design and efficiency. Although this eight-point list was prefaced by the caution that these goals were to be “accomplished within the limitations of the principle that preservation of park resources is a basic requirement,” critics of Mission 66 feared the intrusion of large new facilities designed to accommodate the increased number of visitors. A 1961 article in *The Atlantic* entitled “Resorts or Wilderness?” cautioned that “the taxpayer unknowingly is taking part in the impairment of those masterpieces of nature’s handiwork.”²² At question was whether new park facilities in natural areas actually undermined the larger mission of preservation by encouraging quick, superficial visits by hordes of auto tourists.

Perhaps most crucial to the visitor experience, at Gettysburg and elsewhere, was the concern with creating new visitor centers and improving education with new museums, interpretative programs, and publications. While most of the debate centered around development in natural areas, the educational mission of the National Park Service historical areas was even more dependant on integration of improved facilities and interpretative programs. Mission 66 proposals described the visitor center as the “hub of the park interpretative program,” and cautioned that “many parks lack visitor centers today, and a substantial portion of park visitors, lacking these services, drive almost aimlessly about the parks without adequate benefit and enjoyment from their trips.”²³ It was within this context that Gettysburg National Military Park received its first major infusion of funding and new projects since the New Deal era.

As the Washington-based Mission 66 steering committee publicized the program, the associated Mission 66 staff committee also gathered specific information about each park. An

²¹National Park Service, *Mission 66: To Provide Adequate Protection and Development of the National Park System for Human Use* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1956), 16-17.

²²Devereux Butcher, “Resorts or Wilderness?” *Atlantic* 207:2 (February 1961), 51.

²³National Park Service, *Mission 66: To Provide Adequate Protection and Development of the National Park System for Human Use*, 29.

October 1955 memorandum from William G. Carnes, the chairman of the Mission 66 staff committee, to Lon Garrison, chairman of the Steering Committee outlined the reasons for prioritizing a building program for GNMP in the first year of the program (FY1957). Not only did the Mission 66 staff report that “Gettysburg is perhaps the most important military park in the System,” with 704,000 visitors in 1954, they lamented the lack of a NPS building in the park. This situation meant that “the Service is not identified adequately by the public and it does not get the credit with the public for the excellent state of maintenance of this beautiful park: a corollary is that the Service is not in a position to give the public service at Gettysburg to which the public is entitled.” Not only would a new “Administration-Visitor Orientation Center” solve this problem, the lease on the current Cyclorama building would expire in 1957, making the need for a proper exhibit space for the painting even more critical.²⁴

During the early stages of Mission 66, every NPS unit prepared a prospectus on planned activities and projects under the multi-year program. GNMP’s highlighted the plans for new interpretive facilities, foremost a “new building for the Cyclorama and a Visitor Center, located near the center of the Park, adjacent to the field of Pickett’s Charge, where it will be easily accessible.”²⁵ The precise location had not yet been determined. The prospectus also listed improvements to the road and trail system, clearing historic vistas and replanting historic woodlands, and increased staff. By mid-1960s, GNMP had received a new visitor center and home for the Cyclorama painting as well as “resurfacing of park avenues, repair of the cyclorama painting, . . . new field exhibits and pullouts on the park’s auto tour route, a new High Water Mark walking tour, and a new vehicle bridge over the Railroad Cut.”²⁶

Park Service officials also were aware of the surge of public interest that would accompany the impending Civil War centennial years of 1961-65. The 1950s saw the emergence of a subculture of Civil War enthusiasts and reenactors from the Civil War Roundtable groups started in the 1940s.²⁷ As the Mission 66 program was just getting off the ground in early 1956, Wirth wrote a memo urging that projects be devised and scheduled to help commemorate the 100th anniversary in the Civil War military parks. He wrote that “the key to it is Gettysburg. There, the general theme is that we would have an interpretive center which would not only house the Cyclorama and tell the story of the battle of Gettysburg, but would

²⁴Memorandum, Chairman, Mission 66 Staff to Chairman, Mission 66 Steering Committee, (October 1955), Series II, Steering Committee, RG 23 - Mission 66, National Park Service History Collection, Harper’s Ferry, WV.

²⁵National Park Service, “Mission 66 for Gettysburg National Military Park,” Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, c. 1957. Folder 50, Box A82 13, RG 23 - Mission 66, National Park Service History Collection, Harper’s Ferry, WV.

²⁶Unrau, 253-254.

²⁷Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 97-98.

give a brief synopsis of the entire War Between the States.”²⁸ The Mission 66 staff committee agreed that the NPS should prepare to direct the interest in Civil War commemoration through the useful types of projects proposed by Mission 66, not “proposals for more useless memorial shafts, and perhaps establishment of financially unsound historical dramas, with controversial emphasis on the part the North or the South played.”²⁹ Although control was not given to the National Park Service as hoped, Congress did create the United States Civil War Centennial Commission, chaired by Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant III, in 1957.³⁰ Gettysburg and other Civil War battlefields were important locations for anniversary events.

3. *Development of the Visitor Center Building Type*

As planning for new facilities funded through Mission 66 proceeded, the idea of a visitor center building as a focal point for interpretive activities and visitor services continued to evolve. The visitor center embodied the new public outreach and aesthetic approach of the Park Service; Wirth was savvy to the fact that increased funding hinged on public support and the visitor center represented the most visible and tangible public benefit of the Mission 66 program. As the *Our Heritage* booklet stated:

One of the most pressing needs, and one of the most useful facilities for helping the visitor to see the park and enjoy his visit, is the visitor center. The typical visitor center provides information service, publications, maps, general exhibits on the park, comfort stations and public telephones, and it is manned by uniformed personnel. It is, in fact, the center of the entire information and public service program for the park. The MISSION 66 program plans the construction of 109 visitors centers needed within the next ten years.³¹

Part museum, part information center, part office building, the visitor center building type was developed as an unique hybrid through the efforts of National Park Service employees and became the standard park structure for state and local facilities as well. In *Mission 66 Visitor Center: The History of a Building Type*, historian Sara Allaback traces this evolution of the visitor center idea and provides case studies of several key examples, including the Cyclorama Building at Gettysburg National Military Park. Allaback writes: “This new type of park facility would not only embody the new park visitor management policies, but also the spirit of Mission

²⁸Memorandum, Conrad Wirth to R. F. Lee and Kahler, (18 May 1956), Folder Reports - Steering Committee, RG 23 - Mission 66, National Park Service History Collection, Harper’s Ferry, WV.

²⁹Memorandum, W. G. Carnes, Chief, Mission 66 Staff to Director (12 June 1956), Folder Reports - Steering Committee, RG 23 - Mission 66, National Park Service History Collection, Harper’s Ferry, WV.

³⁰Linenthal, 98.

³¹National Park Service, *Our Heritage: A Plan for Its Protection and Use* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1956).

66, which looked forward to an efficient Park Service for the modern age.”³²

Prior to Mission 66, the largest Park Service building campaign took place during the New Deal, often with Civilian Conservation Corps labor. Drawing on the rustic aesthetic established by Yellowstone, Yosemite, and other Western park lodges from the turn of the century, NPS architecture of the 1930s was relatively modest in scale and utilized natural materials such as stone and log.³³ The deliberate echoing of vernacular forms such as log cabins or adobe structures created a visual link between the natural features of the park and its structures, even when interpretation of local building traditions was more fanciful than realistic. Prime examples include the lodges and cabins built for Shenandoah National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway. At Gettysburg, small stone comfort stations that vaguely suggested traditional Pennsylvania stone masonry were among the CCC projects.

By the early 1950s, the NPS was seeking to project a more up-to-date image offering a clear distinction between the quaint, but inadequate, facilities of an earlier generation, and the new professional approach to park management. The rising cost of material and labor was another factor influencing the embrace of plain, Modernist architecture over hand-crafted rustic structures. However, the new interest in Modernism for Park Service design was an aesthetic as well as economic decision. Even before Mission 66, postwar NPS projects such as the Carlsbad Caverns Visitor Center (Cecil Doty, 1954) and Grand Canyon public use building (1956) embraced a Modernist aesthetic.³⁴ The “Park Service Modern” building typically had “textured concrete with panels of stone veneer, painted steel columns, and flat roofs with projecting flat terraces. These were established formal elements of the modern idiom, but they also often allowed the sometimes large and complex buildings to maintain a low, horizontal profile that remained as unobtrusive as possible.”³⁵ Allaback’s study asserts that the overarching embrace of Modernism for Park Service architecture “reinterpreted the long-standing commitment to ‘harmonize’ architecture with park landscapes.”³⁶ Rather than add a picturesque element to the overall landscape view like rustic architecture, “Park Service Modern offered a new approach that, when successful, provided more programmatic and functional space for less architectural

³²Sara Allaback, “Introduction,” *Mission 66 Visitor Center: The History of a Building Type* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2000), (on-line version at http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/allaback/)<http://www.cr.nps.gov>

³³The classic sourcebook for park architecture in the 1930s is Albert H. Good, *Park and Recreation Structures*, Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1938. See also Ethan Carr, “Mission 66 and ‘Rustication’,” *CRM* 22:9 (1999), 16-19.

³⁴Allaback, “Introduction - A New Building Type,” *Mission 66 Visitor Center*, 1.

³⁵Allaback, “Introduction - A New Style,” *Mission 66 Visitor Center*, 2.

³⁶Allaback, “Introduction - A New Style,” *Mission 66 Visitor Center*, 2.

presence.”³⁷ EODC architect John Cabot explained the preference for Modernism as “it is not a question of modern versus traditional design, . . . it is a question of cultural effectiveness.”³⁸ In the culture of the mid-twentieth century, the perceived honesty of Modern design and materials was deemed the most appropriate for new Park Service facilities.

Visitor Center planning and design began within the Park Service. A 1953 reorganization created the Eastern Office of Design and Construction (EODC) in Philadelphia and the Western Office of Design and Construction (WODC) in San Francisco, both managed by a central Office of Design and Construction in Washington, D.C.. Both offices participated in setting general standards for Visitor Center planning. The findings from a November 1957 conference at EODC and February 1958 conference at WODC were compiled into a report jointly authored by the central Division of Design and Construction and the Division of Interpretation. The recommendations in this document emphasize the coordination of new building design and contemporary interpretative goals. The conference participants were very aware of developing a new type of facility, as evidenced by discussion of proper terminology: “The term ‘Visitor Center’ is sometimes confusing to the public as it is an unusual and specialized facility which may be associated with shopping centers with which the general public is familiar.”³⁹ Now a familiar concept, the new goals and multi-faceted function of the Visitor Center were being developed by this generation of Park Service planners and designers. The 1958 Visitor Center report included information about the general goals of improving public contact and service as well as sample flow diagrams, and specific recommendations for the design of auditoriums/assembly rooms, and information and sales counters

While Park Service designers had a role in planning every new visitor center, they could not do all of the design work. The larger volume of work planned under Mission 66 required that many projects be contracted to private firms. The architectural profession responded enthusiastically to the prospect of government contacts and the project of using Modern architecture to update the public face of the National Park Service. A 1957 *Architectural Record* article subtitled “Mission 66 Program Promises 10 Years of Opportunities and Arguments in the World’s Most Wonderful Sites” described the building campaign as “a chance to demonstrate - to millions of careful observers - what great architecture can accomplish. Always providing it is mindful of its manners and obligations.”⁴⁰ The author acknowledged that architects accepting

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Quoted in Von Eckardt.

³⁹National Park Service - Division of Design and Construction and Division of Interpretation, *Visitor Center Planning* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, 1958), 7.

⁴⁰Emerson Goble, “Architecture (?) for the National Parks,” *Architectural Record* 121:1 (January 1957): 173. For a critique of Modernism in the parks, see Devereux Butcher, “For a Return to Harmony in Park Architecture,” *National Parks Magazine* 26: 111 (October-December 1952), 150-157. Butcher praised the rustic design of structures like Big Meadows Lodge in Shenandoah National Park and criticized structures such as the “office-museum building” at Everglades as “incongruous.”

Park Service commissions would be working within the conventional wisdom that any building is an intrusion in a natural area, therefore the structures should be as modest, and therefore often as undistinguished, as possible. To illustrate the possibilities of Modern park architecture, the article included a perspective rendering and plans for Anshen & Allen's visitor center for Dinosaur National Monument in Utah. A dramatic combination of a window wall pavilion built into the fossil-laden cliff side and a spiraling concrete ramp, the Dinosaur National Monument visitor center demonstrated the possibilities of commissioning private sector architects to create bold designs.⁴¹

4. *Planning the Cyclorama Building - The Architect*

A National Park Service press release attached to a 1962 photograph of the completed Cyclorama Building declared "Gettysburg's Visitor Center is Modern Yet Functionally Elegant in Design."⁴² This combination of function and elegance was created by well-known avant garde architect Richard Neutra in cooperation with his Park Service clients at EODC and GNMP. By choosing Neutra for this commission, the Park Service linked their foray into Modernism with one of its foremost practitioners.

Richard J. Neutra was born in Vienna, Austria in 1892 and grew up surrounded by the rich cultural life of that urbane city. He studied architecture at the *Technische Hochschule* starting in 1911 and finished in 1918, after an interruption from 1914-17 to serve in the army during the first part of World War I. Neutra's view of architecture was shaped by the pioneering Modernists of the early twentieth century, particularly fellow Viennese architects Otto Wagner and Adolf Loos. Neutra indirectly observed and admired Wagner's work of the late 1890s and after, which demonstrated a transition from Neoclassicism to relatively abstract forms that "celebrated their structural anatomy and nature of their materials."⁴³ Loos exerted a more direct influence when Neutra joined his studio in 1912. In addition to his own abstract designs, Loos also introduced Neutra to the work of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, imparting his enthusiasm for the vitality of American architecture. Starting in 1921 Neutra also had an opportunity to work with the important German Modernist Erich Mendelson in Berlin.

⁴¹See also Christine Madrid French's work on Mission 66 including, "The Mission 66 Visitor Centers, 1956-1966: Early Modern Architecture in the National Park Service" (Master of Architectural History (MarH) Thesis, University of Virginia, May 1998); "The Cyclorama Building: Neutra's Monumental Vision at Gettysburg," (*Blueprints* 20:3 (Summer 2002): 7-9); and with Richard Longstreth, "National Historic Landmark Nomination - Gettysburg NMP Visitor Center/Cyclorama Building," (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1999). The State Department was another government agency sponsoring modernist design with an embassy building program in the 1950s. While smaller in scale than the Mission 66 initiative, all of the embassy commissions were given to prominent private sector architects. Neutra and Alexander's embassy in Karachi, Pakistan was part of this program. See Jane C. Loeffler, *The Architecture of Democracy: Building America's Embassies* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998).

⁴²Photograph 26S-1011, Box 104, General Photographic Collection, GNMP Archives.

⁴³Thomas S. Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture: A Biography and History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 19.

Then in 1923, chafing under the depressed economic conditions in Germany and Mendelson's authority, Neutra immigrated to the United States. Although he had to temporarily leave behind his young wife, Dione, who was pregnant with their first child, Neutra was encouraged in his search for new opportunities by fellow Modernist Rudolph Schindler, an old friend from Loos' studio now living in Los Angeles. Before settling in California in 1925, Neutra spent time in New York, in Chicago working for Holabird and Roche, and at Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin studio in Wisconsin. Neutra began to receive international attention for his work with the completion of two late-1920s projects in Los Angeles - the Jardinette apartments (1927) and the Lovell Health House (1927-29). At the Lovell Health House he combined a steel structure with thin concrete walls and cantilevered balconies. Not only was the abstract design daring, but the publicity surrounding the natural medicine-based ideas of its owner, Dr. Philip Lovell, brought attention to the project and its architect. Neutra's work was included in the seminal International Style exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in 1932, establishing his place among the foremost architects of the movement.⁴⁴

Neutra, while eventually designing buildings all over the world, remained based in California for the rest of his career and his work there became particularly evocative of the climate and landscape of Southern California. The Lovell Health House encapsulated Neutra's remarkably consistent philosophy regarding the biological impact of architecture, with its balconies, sleeping porches, and intimate connection to the steeply sloping hillside. His designs were a constant reworking and reexamination of the basic structural forms of post and beam construction, executed in unembellished glass, concrete, and steel. In a monograph about Neutra published at the same time as the Cyclorama Building was under construction, Esther McCoy remarked on Neutra's place within a pioneering group of avant garde architects: "Neutra was one of the small group who accepted the discipline of the machine without coming under its tyranny. He saw the machine as an instrument that could create oases in the desert of mislaid cities, houses relating to communities, and communities in the larger context of cities."⁴⁵ This more holistic approach distinguished Neutra's work and ensured that even his most minimalist projects achieved an elegant geometry. His biographer, Thomas Hines, described the consistency of his work:

Though there was never such a thing as a typical Neutra building, there were patterns, formulas, themes, and motifs that distinguished his work for his modernist peers. A typical Neutra element, for example, that could be expanded or multiplied to form a building was the long, thin, sparsely supported pavilion, virtually closed on one side and very open on the other, with a cantilevered roof slab, particularly wide on the open side. The closed side, away from the view or the major activity area might have a high, narrow, frequently translucent, band of

⁴⁴Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 45-108. See also Arthur Drexler and Thomas S. Hines, *The Architecture of Richard Neutra: From International Style to California Modern* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982).

⁴⁵Esther McCoy, *Richard Neutra Masters in World Architecture Series* (New York: George Braziller, 1960), 7.

steel casement windows to let in light without compromising privacy or usable wall space.⁴⁶

Hines also points out that while Neutra achieved fame for his single family houses, the architect believed his most important buildings were public ones such as the Cyclorama Building.⁴⁷

While the rotunda of the Cyclorama Building contributed an unusual circular element to Neutra's architecture, the office wing exhibited the modular, pavilion form characteristic of Neutra's work. Discussing Neutra's post-World War II projects, McCoy notes that the basic structural vocabulary remained, with the new use of reflecting pools and "spider legs," or posts supporting extended roof beams. Both of these features extended the structure into nature and are evident at the Cyclorama Building. Another key change in Neutra's work in the post-war period was his partnership with architect and planner Robert Alexander. Neutra first collaborated with the younger architect on a planning project for Sacramento during the mid-1940s. Drawn by the opportunity for larger-scale projects, Neutra formed a partnership with Alexander that lasted through the 1950s, while maintaining his own studio. Residential work remained a mainstay of his practice, but with Alexander Neutra designed many commercial and institutional structures during the 1950s and early 1960s, in spite of his failing health. In addition to the Cyclorama Building and Painted Desert National Monument facilities for the Park Service, Neutra and Alexander designed buildings for St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland (1958), the Los Angeles County Hall of the Records (1962), and the U.S. Embassy in Karachi, West Pakistan (1959).⁴⁸

Neutra's previous contact with the National Park Service involved serving on the competition jury for the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis during the late 1940s. The selection of Eero Saarinen's daring design for the Gateway Arch can be seen as a key early foray into modern design for the National Park Service.⁴⁹ In the summer of 1957, Neutra was invited to submit a design for the proposed Gettysburg National Military Park visitor center. The exact process of choosing Neutra for this project is unclear, but correspondence between Neutra and NPS officials during April and May 1957 indicates that Neutra had been following the Mission 66 program with interest. A letter from Neutra to Thaddeus Longstreth, a former associate now based on the east coast, mentions that he has "received a truly charming letter from Mr. W. G. Carnes, the chief man of the National Park Service. He sent me

⁴⁶Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 109.

⁴⁷Hines, 110.

⁴⁸McCoy, 18; Hines, 193-250. See also the 1964 profile of Neutra, including a photograph of the Gettysburg "Lincoln Memorial," "West Coast Architects, I: Richard Neutra," *Arts & Architecture* (March 1964): 17-21.

⁴⁹Richard Longstreth and Christine Madrid French, "National Historic Landmark Nomination - Gettysburg NMP Visitor Center/Cyclorama Building," (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1999), 28.

everything about the so-called Mission 66.”⁵⁰ He urged Longstreth to visit to EODC chief architect John Cabot and seek commissions in East Coast parks. Neutra also replied to Carnes offering to write an article about Mission 66. Conrad Wirth personally answered Neutra with enthusiasm:

We like very much your perceptive analogy in viewing the National Park Service program as an antitoxin to the increasing pressures and complexities of our industrialized civilization. . . . I hesitate to urge you to undertake an article such as you envision, for I know it would require considerable expenditure of time and effort. I can only say that I hope very much that you decide to proceed with it. While there has been good press coverage of MISSION 66, much of it has been in the media of general news reporting, rather than from the more profound approach which you are considering.⁵¹

Apparently Neutra did not actually write an article about Mission 66, but became directly involved in the program a few months later. Wirth’s letter does provide a hint that Neutra’s theories regarding the connections between human biology and architecture may have helped him acquire his National Park Service commissions. Allaback points out the consistency of Neutra’s design and his belief that design choices be developed out of human needs and a harmonious relationship with the environment as likely reasons for his selection by the NPS. She acknowledges that “working with such an artistic personality could pose risks, but with Neutra one knew just the type of building to expect,” resulting in a conservative choice of “radical” architect.⁵²

In *Life and Shape*, an autobiography published the same year as the Cyclorama Building’s dedication, Neutra offers an extended account of his thoughts upon receiving the Gettysburg commission. He was traveling in Arizona during the summer of 1957 when he received a phone call from Washington, D.C.. Infusing the story of receiving the commission with his own ideas regarding the recent design, Neutra described a surprise invitation to “design the Lincoln Memorial Museum, as I understood, on Cemetery Ridge in Gettysburg, the battlefield where the great statesman had delivered that grand, short, wistful, and prophetic

⁵⁰Letter, Richard J. Neutra to Thaddeus Longstreth, (27 April 1957), Folder 009.569, Box 14, Collection 009, Thaddeus Longstreth Papers, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (hereafter Longstreth Papers, UPenn).

⁵¹Letter, Conrad L. Wirth to Richard J. Neutra, (3 May 1957), Folder 009.569, Box 14, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

⁵²Allaback, “Chapter 3, section 2 “Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander, Architects and Planning Consultants,” *Mission 66 Visitor Center*, 5. Neutra and Alexander also designed a park housing and visitor center complex for the Painted Desert Community at Petrified Forest National Park in Apache County, Arizona during the same period. See Allaback, Chapter 4.

address.”⁵³ Neutra linked the strife the Civil War with the present day threats of the Cold War to international peace, and positioned his building as a link between the past and future: “The sad memory of an internal and still painful rift could, by the erection of a monumental building group on a battlefield and through its new dedication, commemorate what mankind must preserve as a common aim of harmony.”⁵⁴ By focusing on Lincoln and the commemorative role of the building on the battlefield, Neutra added his own philosophical approach to the practical concerns of his NPS clients.

Neutra’s vision of a building that “should play itself into the background, behind a pool reflecting the everlasting sky over all of us - and it will not shout out any novelty or datedness,” echoed the Mission 66 ideals for Modern architecture in the parks.⁵⁵ According to Allaback: “Like Mission 66 planners, Neutra believed modern architecture could fade into the landscape, leaving the park to display its historical legacy without interference.”⁵⁶ While hindsight has revealed the flaws in this ambitious approach, it is important to remember that a mainstream embrace of Modernism, particularly for government and other institutional buildings, widely signaled the faith in technology and progress of the late 1950s. In this respect Neutra’s Cyclorama Building and the other Mission 66 projects were very much products of their time.

5. *Planning the Cyclorama Building - The Site*

Well before Neutra discussed the design with NPS officials and architects, an internal discussion took place regarding the placement of a new Gettysburg building. In September 1942, three sites for a new administrative building at Gettysburg were considered - along Baltimore Street near the Cyclorama display, near the private Rosensteel National Museum at the west entrance to the National Cemetery, and a site along Hancock Avenue near the Meade’s headquarters and the High Water Mark of Pickett’s Charge.⁵⁷ Only the third site was owned by the park, and as such it was favored by Regional Supervisor of Historic Sites Roy E. Appleman. Appleman also praised the site’s view of key battlefield features such as the Round Tops, Devils Den and the Angle, as well as proximity to Hancock Avenue and the National Cemetery, drawing a connection between the location of the building in the battlefield landscape and the most effective interpretation for the public:

It is almost exactly on the spot from which the cyclorama was painted as a control point or focal point. This is an important consideration as the cyclorama is to be

⁵³Richard Neutra, *Life and Shape* (New York: Van Rees Press, 1962), 303.

⁵⁴Neutra, *Life and Shape*, 313.

⁵⁵Neutra, *Life and Shape*, 311.

⁵⁶Allaback, Chapter 3, Section 3 “Designing the Visitor Center and Cyclorama Building,” *Mission 66 Visitor Center*, 1.

⁵⁷Unrau, 224.

housed in the new administration-museum building as its most important single exhibit. . . . From here most can be comprehended by the visitor if he is unable to go elsewhere. This factor I consider to be the most important single consideration in selecting the site for the main interpretive center for a battlefield area.⁵⁸

Fixing the current decentralized approach to Gettysburg National Military Park and lack of a NPS building was seen as critical to successfully fulfilling the park's educational mission. A 1947 museum prospectus for GNMP described the important role of a park building housing the cyclorama, a 200-seat lecture room for orientation programs, and museum exhibits, located in a place "readily accessible" to tourists.⁵⁹ NPS Director Newton Drury had decided in 1946 that the GNMP building be located "on relatively flat ground between Emmitsburg Road and Ziegler's Grove" in "front of and below Cemetery Ridge."⁶⁰ Although not exactly the ultimate site of the Cyclorama Building, the general vicinity of Ziegler's Grove near Hancock Avenue and the Rosensteel Museum remained the preferred location for the new park structure through the late 1940s and 1950s.

While prioritizing a location convenient and illuminating to visitors, there were some concerns about the impact of a large structure in the historic battlefield landscape that would be reflected in later decisions regarding the exact placement of the Cyclorama Building at Ziegler's Grove. The 1947 museum prospectus and its 1956 update by historian Frederick Tilberg expressed concern regarding the intrusion of a tall building placed on the crest of Cemetery Ridge.⁶¹ However for interpretive purposes the general policy of the National Park Service at this time, following the lead of historians such as Roy Appleman and Ronald Lee, was to site visitor centers "right on top of the resource" to allow visitors to "see virtually everything from the visitor center."⁶² In weighing the balance between public education and preservation, the special value of having visitor centers located as close as possible to important historic sites was judged of paramount importance.

Mission 66 visitor center planning further institutionalized this approach to interpretative and visitor services. It seemed natural that visitor centers should be "at logical stopping places of interest," but the exact location relative to the larger goals and layout of the park created a

⁵⁸Appleman to Acting Regional Director, (28 September 1942), quoted in Unrau, 225. See Unrau 227-231 for additional discussion of the best site for an administration building during the late 1940s.

⁵⁹Frederick Tilberg, "Museum Prospectus, Gettysburg National Military Park," (23 January 1947), cited in Unrau, 231.

⁶⁰Appleman to Regional Director, Region One, (6 November 1946), quoted in Unrau, 230.

⁶¹Quoted in Segars and Harrison, 40.

⁶²Robert Utley quoted in Allaback, "Introduction," *Mission 66 Visitor Center*, 3.

more detailed impact on the architectural program.⁶³ John Cabot, supervising architect of EODC, compared visitor centers located at a park entrance, en route to a key site, or “terminal” visitor centers located at a popular destination. The latter type was the most common. Terminal visitor centers, like the subsequent one at Gettysburg, “supplied the visitor with a summary of park values while incorporating relevant information about the area; architects of these centers were encouraged to make use of surrounding views in their designs.”⁶⁴ In this approach the visitor center played a central role in telling the story of the park, a role enhanced by proximity to key park locations. In all cases the Park Service design offices controlled the siting and planning of new facilities, basing these decisions on the new Park master planning process. The general trend was to centralize services for greater efficiency rather than the decentralized model of earlier periods. Undeveloped areas of the park were left alone in favor of more intensive use of existing developed areas.

6. Planning the Cyclorama Building - Preliminary Designs

Before hiring Neutra and Alexander, Park Service architects prepared a preliminary design for a Mission 66-funded Gettysburg visitor center located on Cemetery Ridge, south of Ziegler’s Grove. Drawings dated February 1957 show a elevated cylindrical structure with aluminum screen exterior walls divided by tapered concrete ribs that reach to the ground (Figure 2). This scheme included a display area for the Cyclorama painting, other exhibits, and an exterior observation platform. Although it is not known whether Neutra saw this plan, it is likely that the EODC followed the standard procedure of sharing preliminary designs with contract architects. Clearly the NPS architects shared a Modern design vocabulary with Neutra, but he would imbue the project with his personal architectural style and philosophy. Both parties were well aware of the symbolic importance of any building on the Gettysburg battlefield as well as the practical concerns for a new facility.

The first complete proposal prepared by Neutra and Alexander is dated April 28, 1958 and includes a cover with the final words of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address - “shall not perish from the earth.” These drawings show a building with a concrete rotunda and long office wing similar in form to the subsequent Cyclorama Building, but with key differences, particularly in site orientation (Figure 3). The cylindrical rotunda, raised on slab-like piers, was at the south end of the site, close to Meade Avenue, rather than at the north as built. A lower concrete wedge containing the auditorium, similar to the final design, was located on the east elevation between the rotunda and the main entrance at the south end of the office wing. This plan included a balcony on the west side and a nine-story observation tower between the auditorium and main entrance on the east. The thin vertical slab of the observation tower would be a modern replacement for the War Department observation tower in Ziegler’s Grove and provide the dominant vertical element in the composition. Also included in the proposal was a series of sequence and flow diagrams indicating the attention to interpretive concerns in the layout of the

⁶³*Visitor Center Planning*, 5.

⁶⁴Allaback, “Introduction - The Visitor Center,” *Mission 66 Visitor Center*, 4.

building, including the connection between indoor and outdoor exhibits and programs. Upon receiving a copy of these project studies, Thaddeus Longstreth wrote to Dion Neutra, Richard Neutra's son and an architect with the firm: "I am certainly glad this project materialized as your father has worked long and diligently to bring it about. In fact his whole life seems to have been a preparation for it. No one has yet realized to the full extent he has the import of such a memorial."⁶⁵

A small set of slightly earlier drawings and notes from meetings on April 13-14, 1958 provide insight into the discussions between Neutra and the Park Service that led to the first complete preliminary designs. The drawings are dated April 7 or 8, 1958 and show a similar, but simplified form.⁶⁶ The main difference was the location of the auditorium within the north side of the rotunda with the projection room in the ramp core. Here the rectangular office wing connected directly to the circular rotunda without an intermediate wedge form for the auditorium. The observation tower was free-standing near the east entrance and labeled "optional." While the exterior forms were simplified, this design was more complicated in section, with bathrooms located in a basement level, a spiral staircase to the exterior balcony, and separate approach and departure stair/ramp combination to the Cyclorama viewing gallery.

Presumably these plans were the point of departure for the discussion about a week later between Neutra and John Cabot of EODC, with other representatives of NPS and the architects also participating. Neutra had carefully examined the park museum prospectus and the discussion ranged among exhibits, visitation numbers, design and structural elements, and project communication procedures. One specific question Neutra raised with Cabot after reading the museum prospectus regarded the concerns about intrusion at a historic location. Cabot confirmed that the bulk of the building would have to be "pretty close" to Ziegler's Grove to avoid intruding on the Cemetery Ridge skyline, but the current "layout seems ok."⁶⁷ Neutra also raised questions regarding topics such as the preferred views from balconies, lobby, and auditorium, display of the painting, and wheelchair access.

The preliminary plan included a reflecting pool and this feature raised some concerns that illustrate the contradictions that could arise in the Mission 66 approach to park architecture. Notes from the April 13th portion of the meeting indicate that a NPS landscape architect cautioned that the reflection pool idea "must be sold" to Washington officials, because it was an artificial addition to the natural landscape. By extension, the issue was raised that the "building should not be important because of itself," with the example that a Frank Lloyd Wright building for Yosemite was discouraged to avoid having the building become the public attraction, not the

⁶⁵Letter, Thaddeus Longstreth to Dion Neutra, (26 April 1958), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

⁶⁶Neutra and Alexander, Gettysburg Visitor Center drawings, (7-8 April 1958), Folder 009.78, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

⁶⁷Meeting notes, Gettysburg Park Interpretive Center, Conversation John Cabot & Richard Neutra, (13-14 April 1958), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

natural landscape. While this concern may seem exaggerated, it speaks to the difficult balance between creativity and humility expected of even the most high profile Mission 66 projects. The contract architects also were cautioned to avoid discussing radiant heating and other “specific items that might invite controversy” when presenting their proposal to Washington officials. Presumably the fear was that focus on specific equipment or features viewed as potentially expensive could derail the project. They were to remember that “abstraction is the rule” and it was Cabot’s job to “sell Washington” on their ideas.⁶⁸

Cabot made a number of practical suggestions subsequently reflected in the April 28th proposal. It was recommended that the building be at grade and stairs avoided as much as possible, for liability and convenience reasons. The exterior spiral stair to the viewing platform was replaced with a straight run of stairs. The size and placement below grade of the public restrooms was also criticized and changed in the next version of the plan. As transcribed in the meeting notes, “Unrealistic toilets for flow of people. First thing tourist heads for is toilet.”⁶⁹ Other issues discussed included the possibility that the view of the Angle from the observation platform might be blocked by the rotunda, public safety issues regarding the lighting of the Cyclorama gallery approach, and the proper display of the painting. At the meeting conclusion, Cabot expressed his fear that a “first class solution” would be “pick-a-part” by “uninformed supervisors.” Neutra urged emphasis on the “element of Universal Appeal ‘... shall not perish from this earth’ attitude toward project, not just a national shrine.” These notes illustrate the bureaucratic and artistic challenges facing this project.

The second proposal, labeled Scheme “O” and submitted on October 31, 1958 with revisions November 7, 1958, suggested another site orientation for the building while maintaining its basic form of a rotunda and office wing with connecting auditorium wedge.⁷⁰ Here the rotunda was placed on the west, projecting up towards Hancock Avenue. It appears this change was motivated by the desire to fit in parking for 400 cars down the slope.⁷¹ An October 7th meeting between Neutra, Longstreth, Cabot and other NPS officials was dominated by discussion of appropriate placement and landscaping for the parking lot.⁷² Another reason stated for moving the rotunda to the west was to improve the view of the Angle from the observation tower, which remained a part of the scheme, as did the exterior stairs to a roof view platform.⁷³

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Neutra and Alexander, Gettysburg Visitor Center drawings, (31 October 1958, revised 7 November 1958), Folder 009.78, Longstreth Papers, UPenn. The original date on the elevation drawings is September 19, 1958.

⁷¹Meeting notes, (27 October 1958), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

⁷²“Conference Notes at National Park Service Office,” (7 October 1958), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn

⁷³Meeting notes, (27 October 1958), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

There was continuing discussion regarding the nine-story observation tower. Neutra urged his clients to make the tower part of a comprehensive building program, expressing his belief that some sort of tower would be wanted in the future and would become a dominant feature. Neutra viewed the tower as providing a panoramic vista of the peaceful landscape after experiencing the “nightmare” of battle through the Cyclorama painting. Cabot agreed that this “simple defense” justified the tower, even if including expensive elevator equipment was still in question.⁷⁴

A note on the ground floor plan emphasized the inclusion of an “assembly grounds for festival orations” and an illuminated rostrum within one side of the rotunda for invited speakers addressing issues of world peace. This idea came up in the April 13th meeting with Cabot, but was not as prominently featured on the first proposal drawings. Although the rostrum and outdoor gathering area remained in the design as-built, it is not clear how completely the Park Service embraced Neutra’s vision. His interest in Lincoln and the message of peace to be taken from a battlefield setting played an important role in his approach to the project. In *Life and Shape*, he describes the importance of the rostrum to the overall design and his vision for its use:

I would like the museum exhibit sequence to have its climax in a dimly but solemnly illuminated “rostrum of the prophetic voice,” to be seen from the auditorium which we shall build, as well as from a tremendous, gently rising outer gathering ground, in the shadow of Ziegler’s Grove, the historic oak woods on Cemetery Ridge. . . . Every year a great statesman from one of the nations of this earth might be invited to speak here.⁷⁵

Neutra saw an opportunity to use Lincoln’s memory to provide an alternative to the overheated rhetoric of the Cold War and for the benefit of all humanity.

Discussion of Neutra’s so-called “shrine” idea appears in the notes of an October 27, 1958 meeting leading up to the second proposal drawing submission. NPS historian Ronald Lee is noted as supportive of the idea. While offering to “forget” the idea if Lee did not like it, Neutra seems to have been avidly promoting the concept of connecting the lessons of the battle, as expressed by Lincoln, with contemporary world politics. He even described the visitor experience of return from the peaceful tower view to the rostrum to contemplate a “few sentences of [Gettysburg] address or notice of Nerhu speaking prophetic words on such and such a date.” The notes indicate that while his NPS clients were not necessarily opposed to this idea, they were more concerned with the effective flow of visitors through the building. Cabot maintained that the “day to day operation” and the Cyclorama were the important things.⁷⁶

⁷⁴“Conference Notes at National Park Service Office,” (7 October 1958), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn; and Meeting notes, (27 October 1958), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

⁷⁵Neutra, *Life and Shape*, 311-312.

⁷⁶Meeting notes, (27 October 1958), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

It appears that the second submission would have been too expensive to build and the problem of site placement was not adequately resolved. A third, and final, submission of preliminary designs, "Scheme P" was dated December 19, 1958. In a letter to Cabot, Dion Neutra itemized the changes made to bring the cost down to the \$950,000 budget from the \$1,170,000 for "Scheme O." With the exception of eliminating the observation tower, many of the changes were more subtle adjustments in square footage and equipment. By consolidating the mechanical room in the center of the plan opposite the auditorium, a basement and excavation for half of the office wing were eliminated. Addition of a roof spray pond eliminated the need for a cooling tower for the air conditioning system.⁷⁷ The auditorium was reduced to 200 seats, but an additional retractable wall increased the access to outside space around the rostrum area. Cheaper options were planned for many interior finishes - i.e. plaster instead of terrazzo bathroom walls - but a bid schedule was provided for reinstating these details if funds became available.⁷⁸

The most noteworthy change in Scheme P was the placement of the rotunda to the north within the edge of Ziegler's Grove. The Cyclorama Building design had now rotated 180 degrees and this final solution was judged to be the most satisfactory. The building would be recessed in a deep cut on the east side of the rise. The tall rotunda would be silhouetted by the trees of Ziegler's Grove and the roof top overlook on the office wing would have an unobstructed view to the Angle on the south. Material excavated from the construction site would be used to create a berm at the south edge of the parking lot. Dion Neutra indicated that this placement decision by the NPS had surprised Neutra and Alexander and raised some new questions regarding site preparation:

As you know, we were quite concerned about the placement of the building so deeply into a cut near the top of a hill which is expected to have rock excavation problems. Not having any idea what this material will cost to remove, and whether it will be at all suitable for use to create a landscaped bank near the parking area, we tried a number of added site sketches to explore possibilities. . . . While we would probably never have had the idea to propose such a drastic treatment of the site, we do feel that the building now seems to nestle into the site

⁷⁷While the ground level reflecting pool had been in the other preliminary schemes, the roof pools were a new addition to the design discussion. In meeting notes from March 6, 1959, Cabot raised the problem of roof maintenance, but the consensus seemed to be that the idea was sound as long as it wouldn't be too costly to construct. See "Meeting with Mr. Cabot at Park Service Office," (6 March 1959), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

⁷⁸Neutra and Alexander, Gettysburg Visitor Center drawings "Scheme P", (19 December 1958), Folder 009.78, Longstreth Papers, UPenn; Letter, Dion Neutra to John Cabot, (20 December 1958), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

in a very fine way and are quite happy with the solution.⁷⁹

With this solution, the project was ready to move forward. Dion Neutra requested additional information from Cabot including a site plan showing which trees were to be removed, and a verified topographic plan so the firm could proceed with the working drawings. Several renderings prepared by Neutra and Alexander depicted the final design scheme with the rotunda projecting into and partially surrounded by Ziegler's Grove (Figure 4).⁸⁰

Work proceeded on the final construction drawings during the first half of 1959. Ever mindful of potential bureaucratic pitfalls, Cabot cautioned Neutra not to overemphasize the commemorative aspect of the project. He also questioned the necessity to "build up any sentiment," as there was "no sales problem." At this stage he felt that publicity would be undesirable as it would "only stir up a lot of criticism."⁸¹ It is not clear whether Cabot was worried about criticism of the cost or the design itself, but regardless the plans for a dramatic Modern structure on the Gettysburg battlefield were moving forward. The construction drawings, specifications, and detail drawings were complete on June 1, 1959. While sometimes schematic, these drawings represent the final design for the Cyclorama building, including an exterior ramp to the battlefield overlook on the roof of the office wing, aluminum sun louvers along the east elevation of the office wing, and the retractable walls in the rostrum/auditorium area. In the front of the specifications was a "personal word to the bidders" signed by Richard Neutra and Robert Alexander. The architects reassured potential bidders that "through a cooperative effort, we are going to work together to bring a new building to life. Without in any way modifying the meaning or intent of the contract documents, we believe the spirit with which we enter this operation will be reflected in the final results. Now let's get the job done."⁸²

7. *Constructing the Cyclorama Building*

⁷⁹ Letter, Dion Neutra to John Cabot, (20 December 1958), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn. A series of site sketches from December 1958 indicate concern with proper grading, preservation of existing stone walls, and removing trees on the edge of Ziegler's Grove. Site studies #9 through #14 are found in Folder 009.78, Longstreth Papers, UPenn. An additional summary of the advantages of the final site, dated February 1959, is found in the Richard Joseph Neutra Papers, 1925-1970, Manuscript Division, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles (hereafter Neutra Papers, UCLA).

⁸⁰ Photographs of the Neutra and Alexander renderings are located in Box 105, General Photographic Collection, GNMP Archives (26S-1073 and 26S-1074). A color version the east elevation rendering is available at the NPS Technical Information Center, Denver.

⁸¹ "Meeting with Mr. Cabot at Park Service Office," (6 March 1959), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn. While the notes do not indicate exactly whose remarks these were, it is highly likely these are Cabot's concerns in response to questions by Neutra, who habitually sought publicity for his designs.

⁸² "Specifications and Details for the Construction of the Visitors Center & Cyclorama Building," (1 June 1959), Folder 1, Box 1, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

An invitation for contractor bids was officially issued by Gettysburg National Military Park Superintendent James B. Myers on August 25, 1959. The bid schedule included a number of alternate features to be itemized separately including the exterior ramp and railing, terrazzo areas, the auditorium seating, the roof pools, and stainless steel for the rostrum and interior ramp cage. The general construction contract was awarded to the low bidder, Orndorff Construction of Camp Hill (later New Cumberland), Pennsylvania, with a base bid of \$608,806; with all alternates (1-9) their total bid was \$687,349. The next lowest general construction bid was from Rice and Weidman Inc., with a base bid \$666,980; \$737,870 with all alternates. The contracts for plumbing, electrical, and HVAC also each went to the lowest bidder. Hirsch-Arkin-Pineherst bid \$29,038 on the total plumbing contract including the roof pools. Keystone Engineering Corporation bid \$89,380 on the complete electrical contract. Yorkaire Cooling and Heating won the HVAC contract with a base bid of \$68,197, with an additional \$23,741 to reinstate the cooling tower. On November 3rd Cabot notified Neutra that all the contracts had been approved and that construction was expected to begin by late November/early December.⁸³

November 18, 1959 was the official start date for the contractors.⁸⁴ Now that the design and contracting phases were complete, EODC shifted responsibility for day to day client supervision of the project to the park. Superintendent Myers relied on project supervisor David Smith to represent NPS at the construction site and serve as a liaison between all the parties involved. Although Richard Neutra, and to a lesser extent, Robert Alexander, remained involved with the project, as supervising architect Dion Neutra handled most of the correspondence during construction. Because the firm was based in Los Angeles, they retained former associate Thaddeus Longstreth as an additional supervising architect to make at least weekly site visits from his home in New Jersey. Longstreth was paid per visit for his time and travel expenses. In this role he was included in correspondence between the architects, client, and contractor, and was intimately familiar with the details of the design. A conference was held on November 20th to discuss supervision procedures among the various project participants including Longstreth, representing Neutra and Alexander, Orndorff Construction, and Gettysburg NMP.⁸⁵ Longstreth explained that his "primary function was the interpretation of the plans and specifications from

⁸³Invitation for Bids - General Construction Contract, (25 August 1959), Box 1, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives; Lump Sum Contracts (14-10-529-124), Folder 17 (oversize), Box 16, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives; Letter John Cabot to Dion Neutra, (3 November 1959), Folder 5, Box 2, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

⁸⁴Letter David Smith to Neutra and Alexander, (27 November 1959), Folder 5, Box 2, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

⁸⁵In attendance at this conference were James B. Myers, Superintendent, S. G. Sollenberger, Assistant Superintendent, Thomas R. Treher, Administrative Assistant, Brickley Orndorff, Contractor, Mrs. Orndorff, Secretary, John J. Bordner, Vice President and Chief Estimator for the Contractor, Willie Verbitsky, Contractor's Superintendent, Thaddeus Longstreth, Architect, and David O. Smith, Project Supervisor. See "Visitor Center and Cyclorama Building - Minutes of Conference," (20 November 1959), Folder 5, Box 2, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

an architectural and aesthetic viewpoint rather than the mechanical aspects of the building.”⁸⁶ For mechanical questions there would be periodic visits from the firm’s West Coast-based engineers. As the project was expected to take about a year to complete, approximately twelve, or monthly, site visits from the West Coast were planned. Cabot and the other EODC architects and engineers continued to monitor the progress of the project and were the ultimate authority for decisions on behalf of the National Park Service. An EODC engineer oversaw regrading and preparation of the site during the fall of 1959.⁸⁷

In spite of the early efforts to facilitate communication and encourage friendly collaboration, questions regarding the proper placement of the footings quickly caused tension between the architects, client representatives, and contractors. It was discovered that the location of the test piles driven in May did not correspond to the current placement of the building. The records of EODC architect Donald Nutt indicated that on September 14, 1959, the building was moved twenty feet east to more accurately reflect the plans, thereby saving “many trees in Ziegler’s woods and considerable excavation.”⁸⁸ The difference was enough to require changes to the foundation footing design in several areas. As reported by Smith and a local civil engineer contracted by EODC, “due to the sharp local variations in the elevation of bedrock, this shift probably invalidates both the estimated footing elevations and the choice between spread footings on rock and pile foundations as shown on the drawings.”⁸⁹ EODC determined that the building would remain on the current site and not be shifted to correspond to the test piles. Orndorff Construction resisted assuming the extra expense of unexpected blasting or backfill caused by the shift in location. Brickley S. Orndorff, company president, protested to Myers that they had been ready to start pouring concrete on December 11th and now “our job progress is far behind that anticipated, and equally important, our field expenditures are unreasonably wasted through this unfortunate delay.”⁹⁰ Neutra and Alexander prepared revision sheet 8 to show the revised foundation footings and an official change order (No. 1 for this project) was filed on

⁸⁶Typescript, “Gettysburg Visitor Center and Cyclorama,” (20 November 1959), Folder 5, Box 2, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

⁸⁷A conference and dinner was held on December 17, 1959 to discuss job procedures and chain of command. Representatives of the contractors and subcontractors, the Park, EODC, and Neutra and Alexander (Richard and Dion Neutra, Thaddeus Longstreth) were in attendance. See typescript “Minutes of Conference Held December 17, 1959,” Folder 009.562, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

⁸⁸Memorandum, Supervising Architect, EODC to Project Supervisor David O. Smith, (28 September 1961), Folder 4, Box 1, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

⁸⁹Memorandum, Parker Zhender & Associates to Neutra and Alexander, (22 December 1959), Box 2, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

⁹⁰Letter, Brickley S. Orndorff to James B. Myers, (6 January 1960), and additional related correspondence in Folders Orndorff, December 1959 and Orndorff, January 1960, Box 2, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

April 5, 1960 to allow Orndorff Construction to adjust their charges.⁹¹

Progress on the foundations moved slowly during the first months of 1960, due to inclement weather and continued discussion of the footing changes and proper construction and supervisory procedures. Minutes of a conference on February 17th illustrate ongoing tension. Attendees included Brickley Orndorff (President), John Bordner (Engineer), and Willie Verbitsky (Superintendent) for the general contractor, Sollenberger, Nutt and Smith for the Park Service, and Longstreth for the architects.⁹² The conversation seemed to circle around complaints from the contractor that government bureaucracy and the distance of the architects was causing delays in getting answers to day to day questions while Park Service officials contended that the contractors needed to plan ahead and anticipate questions, not expect instant responses. Meanwhile, Cabot had previously expressed annoyance with Dion Neutra regarding the amount of correspondence and supervision their contract required of his staff and what Cabot saw as Neutra and Alexander's attempts to circumvent procedure and deal directly with the park superintendent.⁹³ The complications of a government contract for an unusual building seemed to be wearing patience thin on all sides.

Concrete work on the foundations and columns occupied the spring of 1960. Questions arose regarding the quality of the concrete mix; inspection revealed air pockets in some columns and footings that required demolition and repouring. Dion Neutra praised Smith for diligently inspecting the concrete work and his "resistance to getting pushed into the position of responsibility for results for which the contractor is responsible."⁹⁴ Smith summarized the defective concrete problem for Cabot and EODC as lack of proper placing and vibration when he was not personally watching the contractors. The ribbed exterior wall of the rotunda drum and auditorium/mechanical wing also proved challenging to the contractor. The architects were concerned about a uniform finish that minimized the appearance of construction joints. They rejected the contractor's efforts to substitute cheaper plywood formwork for the vertical one by six ship lap boards called for in the specifications. Dion Neutra reminded Orndorff that the finer details were essential to the design, and that "this is why the Park Service went west for their architect, and why this will be a distinguished building with all of us working on it, dedicated to this proposition."⁹⁵ With the exception of the steel roof truss in the rotunda, the Cyclorama

⁹¹Folder 3 - Change Orders, Box 1, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

⁹²Minutes of Conference, (17 February 1960), Folder , Box 2, Series I, GETT 41 097, GNMP Archives.

⁹³Letter John Cabot to Dion Neutra, (15 January 1960), Folder , Box 2, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

⁹⁴Letter "A," Dion Neutra to Smith, (7 March 1960), Folder 1, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

⁹⁵Letter, Dion Neutra to Orndorff, (18 March 1960), Folder 1, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives. See also Folder 10 - Orndorff Correspondence, February 1960, Box 2; Folder 1 - Omdorff Correspondence, March 1960; and Folder 3 - May 1960, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives; Architect's Monthly Report, (March 1960) and (April 1960), Folder 009.564, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

Building's structural system was all reinforced concrete. Quality control for the concrete would be crucial to the project for both aesthetic and structural reasons.

Orndorff began building the rotunda walls of the Cyclorama rotunda during May 1960. The construction method was poured-in-place reinforced concrete, completed in sections. Photographs indicate that the northwest half of the drum was constructed to full height and half the steel roof trusses erected (Figure 5). Then the other half of the drum was poured and the rest of the trusses put in place (Figure 6). The unbroken surface of the Cyclorama drum with its thin vertical ribs was essential to the visual effect of the project and, consequently, its construction and finish were carefully monitored. Similar attention was paid to interior concrete surfaces. After a decision to eliminate chamfered corners on interior concrete, Dion Neutra explained to Orndorff engineer John Bordner, "the reason for this change is that we have found that the effect of the chamfers is to make the building look clumsy and warehousey rather than sharp and crisp. While we would appreciate as dense and sharp corners as possible, we would prefer an occasional small rock pocket to the effect we would get with the chamfers."⁹⁶

Discussion of the stone veneer panels over the rotunda piers and on the south office wing wall also illustrates the concern with finishes and materials. The original conception was to cover these surfaces with mosaic tiles; at the Park Service's request this veneer was changed to local fieldstone. In August 1959, Cabot wrote to Dion Neutra:

We are attempting in this building to supply the visitor with a certain sense of relationship to his community. Though other facets of the design are not regional in character, it is important that the stonework be indigenous. A horizontal feeling and strong horizontal joints are not typical. . . . Any very great and major departure from the stonework of Pennsylvania would indeed be unfortunate.⁹⁷

After visiting several local stone barns and houses, test panels were prepared (one each during April, May and June 1960). Discussion about the proper color, mortar joints, and coursing continued throughout the summer. In September the third sample was approved, with a series of specific directions for the masons. The architects and EODC cautioned that the panels should be constructed of random pattern, irregular stones, avoiding any quoining effect at the corners or strong horizontal coursing. They recommended that larger, darker stones be used at the bottom and transition to lighter and smaller stones at the top, with thin mortar joints to give the visual impression of a dry laid wall.⁹⁸

⁹⁶Letter, Dion Neutra to John Bordner, (4 March 1960), Folder 3, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

⁹⁷Letter, Cabot to Dion Neutra, (27 August 1959), Folder 009.569, Box 14, Longstreth Papers, UPenn. The reference to mosaic tile appears on a handwritten note in the same folder.

⁹⁸Letter, Longstreth to Orndorff, (29 September 1960), Folder 7, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

During summer 1960, concrete work progressed on the exterior and interior wall, ramps, and stair landings. Much of the project correspondence revolved around final decisions for materials, finishes, and colors throughout the building. One example is the ceramic tile used on the inner wall of the Cyclorama ramp. Initially this area was to simply be painted, but during the design revision Cabot and EODC expressed preference for a more durable tile surface. As relayed by Dion Neutra in a letter to Cabot, Richard Neutra feared that this change would alter the character of his design for the ramp: “He dearly wants the ‘cage’ to dominate the inside rail and drum face which you now insist must be tile. He was actually very happy with the paint finish on this surface, and is very worried about the possibility that the tile will glisten and detract from the cage.”⁹⁹ Heavy vinyl wall covering was suggested as an alternative, but Dion allowed that if the tile was still preferred, they would proceed with the “unusual ‘random round’ pattern [they] had found which seemed to express the unusual form of the building.” This issue resurfaced after the March 31/April 1 1960 site visit that included both Richard Neutra and Cabot. Apparently there was discussion of leaving the concrete of the inner drum wall exposed, with a bush-hammered finish, as Neutra still worried that no tile would be dignified enough. Dion Neutra had his own reservations about the potentially “warehouse-like” appearance of that much bush-hammering and proposed an alternative that pleased everyone. He obtained a sample of thin rectangular tile from the same company and described the new approach in a letter to Cabot:

My father was quite taken by the unusual shape of the tile and liked the idea I suggested of staggering the short horizontal joints and running the long joints through to allow the pattern to go around the curve naturally and be trimmed at an angle top and bottom as it joins the ramp. He suggested that we obtain samples of this pattern in a mixture of two closely related shades of dark brown or black, perhaps alternating vertical strips to give a very subtle corduroy-like effect as a backdrop for the stainless tubes.¹⁰⁰

It was determined that the tile would be installed with chocolate brown grout and in alternating rows of dark brown and dark blue. The switch to this arrangement from the round tiles included in the contracting bid resulted in a savings of approximately \$1550.¹⁰¹ The tile was imported from Japan by Los Angeles Tile Jobbers and installed during May 1961.

Dion Neutra hoped that the savings accomplished by changing the type of tile would be applied to upgrading another noteworthy feature of the building, the vertical aluminum sun louvers shading the second floor of the office wing’s east facade. Louvers such as these were

⁹⁹Letter, Dion Neutra to John Cabot, (29 July 1959), Folder 009.569, Box 14, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

¹⁰⁰Letter, Dion Neutra to John Cabot, (15 April 1960), Folder 2, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹⁰¹Letter, Dion Neutra to John Cabot, (20 July 1960), Folder 5, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

another feature frequently employed by Neutra in his later work. Manufactured by the Lemlar Corporation of Los Angeles, the sun louvers were attached at the top and bottom to bar that was moved by an electric motor mounted on the wall behind the louvers. A 1966 monograph on Neutra's work during the early 1960s indicated that "Neutra was the first to use this device architecturally for the rotation of the earth, and shade and diffuse light into the humanly occupied interiors. He has carefully developed this feature over a quarter of a century."¹⁰² Neutra used aluminum sun louvers on a variety of institutional projects including the Mariners Medical Arts Center in Newport Beach, California(1963); Adelphi University, Long Island, New York (1955-63); and the County Hall of Records in Los Angeles (1962). Although Neutra pioneered the use of this type of louvers, by the 1960s they were not unique to Neutra buildings. For example National Park Service architect Cecil Doty used the same Lemlar louvers on the east elevation of the Death Valley Visitor Center, another Mission 66 project.¹⁰³

The initial plans called for manual operation only, but the architects strongly urged their clients to reconsider. In July 1960, Donald Nutt informed Dion Neutra of EODC's reasoning on the matter:

It is the consensus of opinion that, though the additional cost for automatic operation is not great, we would be wise to leave the operation as now planned.... We feel in this case that the added operational and maintenance costs to be anticipated, if your proposal were accepted, outweigh the aesthetic merits. Functional satisfaction has been accomplished in the present design. Your continued thoughts toward the betterment of a fine building are sincerely appreciated however.¹⁰⁴

Neutra persisted, however, writing to the Lemlar Manufacturing Company for operating cost information. Lemlar assured him that "as to maintenance costs we can confidently say that this will be far less than the labor cost of an operator to turn the crank and control of the louvers daily by hand."¹⁰⁵ Dion Neutra forwarded this information to Nutt, as well as his father's thoughts on the matter:

He is, of course, recognized as perhaps the originator of this type of solar control, having first used it some twenty years ago, when every piece had to be custom

¹⁰²W. Boesiger, ed., *Richard Neutra, 1961-66: Buildings and Projects* (New York, Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 62.

¹⁰³Allaback, "Chapter 6 - Characteristics of a Doty Design, Style and Materials," *Mission 66 Visitor Center*.

¹⁰⁴Letter, Donald S. Nutt, Acting Supervising Architect, EODC to Dion Neutra, (29 July 1960), Folder 5, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹⁰⁵Letter, Lee Miller, President, Lemlar Manufacturing Company, to Dion Neutra, (16 August 1960), Folder 6, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

made. He wanted me to emphasize that in his experience, manually operated louvers have a tendency to be used only when the discomfort is so great as to cause someone to get up and close them. Then since there is a good lighting system, there is little or no incentive to open them up again.¹⁰⁶

Neutra mainly was concerned about the effect of continually closed louvers on the appearance of the east elevation. Although Cabot continued to express doubts, the argument about labor versus operating cost did sway the Park Service. In November 1960 Change Order No. 6 allowed that “the change from manual operation of the sun louvers to automatic operation of the sun louvers, after due investigation and consideration, is considered beneficial in the operation of the building. The entire installation will be made by the company that makes the louvers, thereby eliminating any conflict between maker and installer in case of operational difficulties.”¹⁰⁷

It is not clear from the discussion of the louvers whether a true solar-operated system, with light sensors signaling the louver motor, or simply the difference between manual crank and electric motor movement of the louvers was being contemplated. Lemlar described the potential installation as “fully automatic control with photo override.”¹⁰⁸ Dion Neutra eliminated the photo electric override from the job in a September 7th letter to Bordner.¹⁰⁹ Examination of the remaining equipment indicates that the actual installation included electrical operation, but not solar sensors. The louvers were delivered to the job site at the end of April 1961, but not installed for many months due to construction delays.¹¹⁰

As concrete work progressed through the fall, the other major structural feature was being erected. In order to allow an unobstructed, 360-degree view of the Cyclorama painting, the rotunda roof was supported by a steel truss system suspended above the gallery ceiling. Fabricated by Bethlehem Steel, the roof structure combined tapered steel girders and wire cable bridge strands, held in tension around a hollow center post approximately 18 feet high. Each of the ten girders was bolted to a concrete ledge cast along the inside top of the wall and connected

¹⁰⁶Letter, Dion Neutra to Donald Nutt, (17 August 1960), Folder 6, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹⁰⁷Change Order No. 6, Finding of Fact, (28 November 1960), Folder 3, Box 1, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹⁰⁸Letter, Lee Miller to Dion Neutra, (26 August 1960), Folder 7, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹⁰⁹Letter, Dion Neutra to John J. Bordner, Orndorff Construction, (7 September 1960), Folder 7, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹¹⁰Letter, Clifton Sheets, Treasurer, Lemlar Manufacturing Co., to James Myers, (11 August 1961), Folder 8, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives. Sheets was requesting a partial payment because of the delay. The installation delay may be to blame for loose fastenings that caused operation problems shortly after the NPS occupied the building. See Letter, James Myers to Brickley Orndorff, (14 March 1962), Folder 13, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

to the top of the center post. The bridge strands were bolted to the bottom of the center post. A series of steel purlins bolted in place provided cross-bracing between the girders, giving the structure a spider web appearance. During construction a platform supported the bottom of the center post. Once the entire structure was in place and the bridge strands adjusted to hold the post vertical, the support platform was removed and concrete work continued on the inner drum core and ramp of the rotunda. Bethlehem Steel featured the Gettysburg project in a booklet called *Wire Rope: Structural Uses*. Engineers Parker, Zehnder and Associates were utilizing current structural technology to span the Cyclorama gallery. The use of bicycle wheel trusses for stadiums and other round structures from this period can be seen as a parallel trend, however these structures rely on compression from a surrounding ring while the Cyclorama's more robust girders do not.¹¹¹

By the end of 1960, the major structural features of the building were either in place or mostly complete. Orndorff had replaced job superintendent Willie Verbitsky with his "top man," Jim Rose.¹¹² Representatives from Parker-Zehnder Associates visited the site early in December to inspect the tightening of the bridge strands in the Cyclorama's steel roof structure. However, it was not possible to enclose the building before severe weather set in and work proceeded slowly. The final roof slab - the rotunda - was poured during January 1961, but other openings were simply covered with plastic sheeting. The remaining interior concrete work for the Cyclorama ramp and gallery was completed during the rest of the winter 1961. It was not until summer and fall 1961 that the various windows and doors were installed and the building was fully enclosed.

Meanwhile, discussion of proper finishes and color schemes continued. Overall, Neutra was concerned about using the choice of color and materials to bring richness and texture to his abstract design. It was an additional challenge to achieve these effects within the budget of a government contract. The final color scheme was the result of several rounds of give and take between Neutra and his clients on subtle differences such as charcoal versus black or beige versus brown. In July 1960, long before any interior finish work was ready to begin, Richard Neutra was rethinking some of the initial interior color choices out of concern that his original concept of a dimly lit museum area emphasizing the displays might be too dark.¹¹³ That fall he was still working out the best color scheme for creating a subtle, yet effective, contrast among exterior elements in order to emphasize the forms of the structure. For instance, he debated whether a beige or gray textured paint would most effectively de-emphasize the lower levels of

¹¹¹Copy of Bethlehem Steel booklet in Richard Segars Research Files, GNMP Archives; "Bicycle Wheels," *Progressive Architecture* (February 1961), 145-153. Additional research is required to understand how the Cyclorama roof structural system compares to other round structures used for display and built during the late 1950s and 1960s (i.e. Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum, Gordon Bunshaft's (with SOM) Hirshorn Gallery in Washington, D.C., and General Motors and Ford Pavilions at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair).

¹¹²Memorandum, Dave Smith to Chief, EODC, (31 October 1960), Folder 8, Box 3, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹¹³Letter "B," Dion Neutra to John Cabot, (21 July 1960), Folder 5, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

the drum and office in contrast to the lighter shades above. In the rotunda exhibit area he chose a palette of warm earth tones for the terrazzo, paneling, and concrete ramp accented by the stainless steel ramp cage, rostrum and bridge transition. He was particularly concerned that this area have a feeling of dignity. Splashes of color were more acceptable in the lobbies and office wing. Lemon yellow doors signified the administrative areas while dark orange was used on utility/service spaces. A color block paint scheme appeared in the lobby corridors leading to the rest of the office wing and the projection room wall in the auditorium (Figure 7). Dion Neutra explained that the “use of color montages in certain less important areas was intended a) to conceal or confuse the usually ugly assembly of ‘utilitarian cabinets or holes’ b) to provide some relief from the dignified rather monumental scheme elsewhere.”¹¹⁴

EODC brought Anne Massey, an interior designer, to advise on the job as discussions of the final color choices continued in December 1960 and early 1961. For example, the architects resisted the idea of painting the exterior bathroom doors a contrasting color, feeling that would haphazardly break up the visual effect of the lower wall. Having an exterior entrance to the visitor center bathrooms was characteristic of the new Mission 66 facilities, but client and architect disagreed on how much to emphasize this feature. Acting Supervising EODC architect Donald Nutt wrote in January 1961: “It is most important that the principal entrance to the toilet rooms be from the exterior, as the interior corridor leading to these rooms is not large enough to successfully handle entrance and exit crowds. . . . For this reason, we are still of the opinion that these doors must be accented.”¹¹⁵ Nutt maintained that in this and other color/materials questions EODC had “endeavored to be conscious at all times of your basic concept in the placement of color planes, the impression we are creating for the public by the employment of colors and finishes, and the practical aspect of providing finishes which would not require constant maintenance.”¹¹⁶ Dion Neutra’s response made a number of suggestions for minor color adjustments on the exterior and interior, stating “my father has spent years thinking about colors and their effect,” but agreed to defer to the client whenever necessary. Aluminum letter signs on the exterior bathroom doors seem to have settled the question of contrasting paint, with Dion Neutra relaying his father’s message that having just returned from bladder surgery, he fully supported clearly marked toilets, but felt that signs would be sufficient as “in no major public building of dignity, are the toilet doors played up to the extent proposed here.”¹¹⁷ The revised color choices were officially approved in early March, with a few details still to be

¹¹⁴Letter, Dion Neutra to John Cabot, (16 November 1960), Folder 9, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹¹⁵Letter, Donald Nutt to Dion Neutra, (4 January 1961), Folder 1, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Letter, Dion Nutt to Donald Nutt, (24 January 1961), Folder 1, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives. This detailed letter includes discussion of the “Mondrian Mural” or color block treatment for the projection booth wall in the auditorium.

determined.¹¹⁸

Considerable attention was also paid to the exterior finish of the rotunda drum. After the concern regarding formwork that would minimize seams between pours and create a smooth surface, the contractors were directed to sandblast or patch any irregularities to prepare for a finish coat of Thoroseal. As described by the sales manager from Standard Dry Wall Products:

The purpose of this texture coat is to provide a completely uniform fine grain, permanent color and texture surface approximately 1/8" to 1/4" thick which will hide form marks, patches, and other irregularities, exclude water from the structure, prevent deterioration, spalling, discoloration, or other damage to the surfaces due to the elements, as well as provide a permanent color to the building (except where painting is specified over the texture coat). It cannot be too strongly emphasized that this is a permanent monumental building, and as such is expected to require little or no maintenance and that the most meticulous care shall be exercised in this important portion of the project to produce a finish which will last indefinitely.¹¹⁹

Ideally the Thoroseal gave the exterior walls a uniform, white surface; the addition of mica chips to the final coating created a glitter effect still visible today. It took some trial and error to get the Thoroseal applied properly. A test section sprayed on in August 1961 showed unsatisfactory results (Figure 8). Longstreth described the application as "blotchy, sparkle sparse."¹²⁰ In September the less conspicuous lower drum areas were done while the problems with the application gun technique continued. A letter from Myers to Orndorff indicated that while overall the job was still unacceptable, recoating done on two test areas did result in an acceptable finish.¹²¹ During November, Dave Smith struggled to have the subcontractor reapply the Thoroseal properly, particularly given the need to do this work only when the temperature was

¹¹⁸Memorandum, Supervising Architect, EODC to Superintendent, Gettysburg, (6 March 1961), Folder 3, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives. After a site visit in April, Richard Neutra adjusted the choice of "mustard" for a number of doors and other areas to a lemon yellow. See Memorandum, Dave Smith to John Cabot, (24 April 1961), Folder 4, and Letter, John Cabot to Dion Neutra, (10 May 1961), Folder 5, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives. An envelop of color chips and material swatches is in Folder 009.567, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn. Final color choices on undecided features were itemized in a memorandum, David Smith to Supervising Architect, EODC, (6 October 1961), Folder 10, Box 4, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹¹⁹Letter, Phil Donnelly to John Putt, (9 March 1961), Folder 3, Box 4, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹²⁰Record of Supervision Visits, (23-25 August 1961), Folder 8, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹²¹Letter, James Myers to Brickley Orndorff, (2 November 1961), Folder 11, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

above 40 degrees Fahrenheit.¹²² Finally in December 1961 the final coat of Thoroseal was applied.¹²³

8. *Exhibit Preparation and Design for the Cyclorama Building*

While construction of the new Cyclorama Building was proceeding NPS museum specialist Walter J. Nitkiewicz undertook a major conservation effort to prepare Philippoteaux's painting for its new location. The original building specifications included a hanging system for the painting and maintenance catwalk to be constructed of fir. In November 1960 Nitkiewicz informed Smith: "The relining of the Cyclorama painting is now completed making it possible to make accurate measurements which you will need for the drawing up of the specifications for the suspension ring. The length of the painting is 352 feet, 10 ½ inches at the top; and 358 feet 9 inches at the base. You will, of course, be concerned only with the upper length because it, and the circumference of the suspension ring, will have to correspond as closely as possible."¹²⁴ During December 1960, the supporting ring for the painting was redesigned in cooperation with the Museum Branch to accommodate a slightly different method of hanging the painting than anticipated. The Cyclorama gallery included a plaster valance shielding the hanging mechanism at the top of the painting from the spectators' view. In August 1961, moisture problems with the acoustical plaster ceiling in the Cyclorama gallery were finally resolved and Myers asked Orndorff when the lower area of the rotunda might be completed. Nitkiewicz had informed him that the painting could not be hung until he could be assured of a "reasonably dust free condition."¹²⁵

Currently the painting hangs from its wood supporting ring in large folds, with thin vertical bracing boards along seams. Photographs of its installation in the current building show the canvas was cut into vertical strips which were attached at the top and unrolled to floor level (Figure 9). Prior to conservation the painting was already in twelve sections of uneven width; in order to move and rehang it, the painting was divided into twenty-five sections. It was also relined with linen and cleaned.¹²⁶ Historically, cyclorama paintings were displayed with three

¹²²Memoranda, David Smith to James Myers, (17 and 22 November 1961), Folder 11, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹²³Architect's Monthly Reports - Gettysburg Visitors Center, (August, September, and December 1961), Folder 009.559, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

¹²⁴Memorandum, Walter J. Nitkiewicz to David Smith, (4 November 1960), Folder 9, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹²⁵Letter, James Myers to Brickley Orndorff, (8 August 1961), Folder 8, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives. A change order shortly thereafter compensated the contractor for "dustproofing" the floor of the gallery. See Change Order No. 17, (14 August 1961), Folder 3, Box 1, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹²⁶See Walter J. Nitkiewicz, "Treatment of the Gettysburg Cyclorama," *Studies in Conservation* 10:3 (August 1965): 91-115.

dimensional foregrounds, but here the painting is the only object in the large gallery space. While there was some mention during the design stage of a realistic foreground display including wax figures, the \$100,000 cost was viewed as high, prompting Neutra to suggest “avoid[ing] Mlle. Tussard,” and “achieve [the] effect with illumination, symbolic realism only.”¹²⁷ The planter around the base of the Cyclorama ramp at the ground floor containing gun carriages, broken wagon wheels, rocks, and branches was meant to suggest a dry creek bed after battle and provide a sort of foreground to the painting.¹²⁸

While the Cyclorama painting and other museum displays were planned and executed by Park Service museum specialists, the architects were consulted and interested in this aspect of the building. Changes to the exhibit list in June 1960 were intended to avoid “crowded exhibits, congestion of visitor circulation and poor exhibit sequence,” and resulted in a revised museum plan (R-1, dated June 22, 1960).¹²⁹ The changes were described as relatively minor, but important to the Museum Branch. Richard Neutra particularly was intrigued by the relationship between his architecture and the displays it contained. He wrote a brief set of “Remarks About Gettysburg Museum Exhibits” discussing the physiological impact of looking at a series of chronological exhibits such as those planned:

The directionism can in its impact on the brain and the nervous system of the person who walks, stands still and proceeds further while he is looking and internally reverberating impressions just received, be greatly helped by the design arrangements, inscriptions and lettering. . . . The architect endeavors to serve the meticulous job of the historian who has ascertained all facts by advising on the means of producing emotional and lasting memory retention in the visitor, passing the exhibit series and taking with him a long lasting experience.¹³⁰

Similar ideas regarding human physiology guided his approach to the Cyclorama painting display. Richard Neutra wrote of the “Space Time Experience” of ascending a spiral stairway, or ramp. He viewed the subconscious interaction of breathing, working muscles, touching a winding metal rail, inner ear equilibrium, etc. as equally important to the visual experience of a

¹²⁷Meeting notes, Gettysburg Park Interpretive Center, Conversation John Cabot & Richard J. Neutra, (13-14 April 1958), Box 14, Folder 009.569, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

¹²⁸Letter, Dion Neutra to Eugene Desilets, (20 December 1961), Folder 12, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives. Richard Neutra suggested the cannon in this display be lying on its side to avoid projecting too high over the ramp.

¹²⁹Memorandum, John Cabot, Acting Chief, EODC, to Chief of Design and Construction, (18 August 1960), Folder 6, Box 3; and Memorandum, Donald F. Benson, Acting Supervising Architect, EODC to David Smith, (9 September 1960), Folder 7, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹³⁰Richard J. Neutra, “Remarks About Gettysburg Museum Exhibits,” (24 May 1961), Folder 009.565, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

space. Consequently, “architecture, - the designed setting - has not only eye appeal, it speaks every second and over the years to the entire organic entity of the human being.”¹³¹

In addition to the physical arrangement of the gallery and approach ramp, the architects considered the role of the Cyclorama painting light and sound show. Proposals describing the exhibition and interpretation of the painting emphasized the use of sound effects and music to enhance the drama of the presentation. Lighting was to signal the start and finish of the presentation and give visitors an opportunity to examine the painting after the initial dramatic presentation. Dion Neutra contrasted the new arrangement of gradually revealing the painting in a dimly lit room to the previous brightly lit display space.¹³² As the building was being completed, Richard Neutra compared its historical exhibits with the presentation of nature at the Petrified Forest and Painted Desert project. While nature is continuously growing and changing, the Philippoteaux painting shows a “frozen moment of the past.” Neutra felt that at Gettysburg battlefield “the Historical has appeared, from decade to decade, differently to all those who have place many monuments of stone on this battlefield of, in some respect, ever changing significance.”¹³³ Neutra astutely maintained that for historical exhibits, it was the perception of the viewer that changed, not the object itself.

9. Completion and Dedication

The closing inspection for the building took place on January 8-10, 1962, over a year after the originally scheduled completion date. Many details were as yet unfinished, but given the pressing need for the contractor to finalize the job to avoid financial penalties, it was agreed that the job could be accepted with the understanding that remaining tasks should be completed as soon as possible. As the GNMP staff had already delayed moving from the downtown Post Office several times, Myers quickly moved into the new building in spite of lingering problems such as a lack of proper balance for the HVAC system. On March 17, 1962, the building was opened to the public. Myers anticipated large crowds due to the growing curiosity about completion of the new structure. Still, problems with cracked windows, cracked terrazzo, and roof and other leaks remained unresolved. Smith, Myers, and others struggled to coerce the contractors into completing the job and fixing new problems that arose.¹³⁴

¹³¹Typescript, “S.T.E. - Space Time Experience,” Neutra Papers, UCLA.

¹³²See typescripts in Neutra Papers, UCLA, “General Specifications for Light and Sound Provisions in the Gettysburg Cyclorama,” and “Prospectus for the Exhibition and Interpretation of the Gettysburg Cyclorama,” n.d.; Letter, Dion Neutra to Murray Nelligan, Regional Office, (17 January 1962), Folder 009.565, Box 13, UPenn.

¹³³Letter, Richard Neutra to Daniel Beard (National Park Service), (19 January 1962), Neutra Papers, UCLA. Neutra also writes about the Gettysburg exhibits in a typescript “Notes, Abstracted After Latest Inspection of Project on Its Site,” Neutra Papers, UCLA.

¹³⁴Letter, S.G. Sollenberger, Acting Superintendent, to Orndorff Construction Co., (27 February 1962), Folder 13, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives; Letter, James Myers to Neutra and Alexander, (16 March 1962), Folder 13, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives. As of February 20th, the total amount of the lump sum

A series of financial problems for Orndorff Construction had been hanging over the building progress since 1960. That summer, Orndorff notified Park Service officials that his estimators miscalculated the square footage of a major “ribbed wall.” All cost figures for this wall were based on 1,910 square feet instead of 19,116 square feet. Myers recommended compensating them an additional \$14,004, given the fact that they would still be the lowest bidder by over \$35,000 with the adjusted price.¹³⁵ Orndorff’s financial woes continued, however, and by February 1961 he revealed to Dion Neutra and Thaddeus Longstreth that his firm stood to lose \$150,000 on the project. At Cabot’s suggestion, Orndorff filed a claim for additional compensation. Orndorff claimed additional costs due to delay in site preparation, time required to redesign the foundation, delays caused by supervision policies of the architects, a change in construction sequence to prioritize the rotunda instead of the office wing, and changes in the scope of work.¹³⁶ Myers maintained that a “substantially lower in their bid than the next highest bidder, . . . the unusually severe winter of 1960-61 which extended the time on the project and thereby increased their overhead expenses, and. . . the necessity of doing over certain portions of the work as the result of poor workmanship” actually caused the contractor’s financial problems.¹³⁷ Orndorff’s rationale also was refuted by Smith in a lengthy and detailed memorandum. According to Smith, “the contractor’s trouble was not due to any restrictions imposed on him by outside influences, but by his own failure to plan, schedule, and expedite the job. He lacked a sufficiently skilled and experienced organization to handle the intricacies of the job.”¹³⁸ In preparing for eventual legal action over this issue, Cabot confided to Alexander, “We will appreciate any help you can give us and know that you realize that claims of this type are one of the hazards often experienced with the acceptance of low bidders.”¹³⁹ Dion Neutra praised Smith for his efforts, but cautioned, “if it must cost extra to get the job we must have, let’s pay it - but let’s not accept inferior results to what is specified because of this problem.”¹⁴⁰

contract for Orndorff Construction was \$736,864.96. See Lump Sum Contract, General Construction - Gettysburg Visitor Center & Cyclorama, (20 February 1962), Folder 13, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹³⁵Memorandum, Superintendent, Gettysburg NMP, to Regional Director, Region Five, (23 August 1960), Folder 6, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives. The memorandum does not itemize the cost figures but presumably the bulk of the shortfall was for materials such as concrete and steel reinforcing bars.

¹³⁶Letter, Robert Alexander to Donald Nutt, (30 June 1961), Folder 6, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹³⁷Memorandum, Superintendent, Gettysburg NMP, to Regional Director, Region Five, (23 June 1961), Folder 6, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹³⁸Memorandum, Project Supervisor Smith to Chief, EODC, (10 July 1961, revised December 1961), Folder 009.562, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn. For additional detailed responses to the Orndorff claim see Folders 4 and 5, Box 1, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹³⁹Letter, John Cabot to Robert Alexander, (3 July 1961), Folder 7, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹⁴⁰Letter, Dion Neutra to Dave Smith, (12 July 1961), Folder 7, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

As completed, the Cyclorama Building is both unique in form and characteristic of Neutra's mature architectural ideals and vocabulary. A key theme of Neutra's work, shared by many of his Modernist peers including Frank Lloyd Wright and LeCorbusier, is the interplay between indoor and outdoor space. The exterior ramp to the battlefield overlook on the office wing roof links the interior display of the Cyclorama painting to the actual landscape. Originally the southwest corner of the second floor lobby emphasized this feature with a view of the ramp through a large sheet of glass (Figure 10). Now this opening has dividing mullions in the glass and underbrush blocks the view. In addition, the ceiling light fixture that runs along a cove at the west wall continues through this corner to the exterior, a subtle detail emphasizing the connection to the outdoors at the lobby stair area. The curved south wall of the auditorium is another example; the ribbed concrete finish continues from the exterior into the lobby.

The ground level reflecting pool originally located in this area also emphasized the exterior view through the window wall of the first floor lobby. Additional rooftop reflecting pools provided one of most interesting and most problematic aspects of the design. The long pool on the roof of the office wing was intended to reflect the rotunda's dramatic form and enliven the length of the narrow battlefield overlook, encouraging visitors to disperse from the top of the ramp. A cascade from the cantilevered north edge ran into the secondary roof pool on the top of the auditorium wing. The roof pools were justified as key to the functioning of the air conditioning system. During the design revision stage in 1959, Dion Neutra wrote to John Cabot:

We had originally hit upon the idea of roof pools primarily because with them the solar heat gain factor is reduced to about ten degrees with water cover, whereas without it, it is increase [sic.] to fifty-eight degrees and this certainly effects the size of the cooling plant. . . . We fully realize the problems surrounding the roof pools as regards their function in the Air Conditioning System, but they are a vital part of the system as it stands and will annually reduce the air conditioning expense.¹⁴¹

Change Order No. 20, dated October 11, 1961, authorized Orndorff Construction to charge an additional \$300 to caulk the joints in the roof pool. Apparently this effort was not sufficient to prevent leaking since Myers was still unable to fill the pools the next May. Immediate construction problems and persistent maintenance issues indicate the difficulties of maintaining rooftop water features.¹⁴²

The interpenetration of indoors and out was most dramatic in the rostrum area at the east

¹⁴¹Letter, Dion Neutra to John Cabot, (29 July 1959), Folder 009.569, Box 14, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

¹⁴²Change Order No. 20, (11 October 1961), Folder 3, Box 1, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives; Letter, Thaddeus Longstreth to Dion Neutra, (30 May 1962), Folder 009.560, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn. Photographs from 1964 show water damage in the building. The roof pools were finally removed in the late 1970s.

side of the rotunda. The massive window wall at the rotunda and the solid north wall of the auditorium retracted to open the rostrum area to the terrace and lawn, called the “gathering ground” by Neutra. A pivoting wall inside the rotunda further opened the auditorium to the rostrum area. All of the movable walls were manufactured by the Ferguson Door Company of Los Angeles and operated with individual electric motors housed in an attic space directly above. Settling immediately caused problems operating the doors and it appears they were only opened a few times (Figure 11).

These lingering problems with the construction were not mentioned during the Cyclorama Building’s official dedication ceremony on November 19, 1962, the 99th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address. A *National Park Courier* story about the dedication described the new visitor center as “conceived by the architects Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander as a memorial to the new era of human freedom which began with President Lincoln’s restatement of America’s principles at the Dedication of the National Cemetery.”¹⁴³ Director Conrad Wirth presided over the ceremony from the rostrum. Richard Neutra and his wife, Dione attended.¹⁴⁴ Wirth concluded his remarks with a reminder that “our great task lies in preserving all physical remains and in giving added life and meaning to these remains. Our Visitor Center is a great step forward in this latter direction.”¹⁴⁵ According to Allaback, Wirth saw the Gettysburg Visitor Center as a representation of the Mission 66 program’s success and the best in contemporary architecture and planning.

10. Conclusion - After Mission 66

The Gettysburg Cyclorama Building was one of approximately 110 visitor centers constructed under the aegis of Mission 66.¹⁴⁶ In 1970, the American Institute of Architects honored the National Park Service’s Mission 66 projects as “creative architecture attuned to the natural and historical settings. They are designed not only to provide valuable service to the public but to enhance the surroundings and, on occasion, to memorialize a momentous event.”¹⁴⁷ The collaboration of public and private architects resulted in some of the most high profile and interesting examples of Park Service Modern, including Neutra and Alexander’s Gettysburg Visitor Center/Cyclorama Building and Painted Desert Visitor Center and park housing at

¹⁴³“Director Wirth Dedicates Gettysburg Visitor Center,” *National Park Courier* 7:5 (November 1962): 1.

¹⁴⁴See Photograph 5E-5169, Box 43, General Photographic Collection, GNM P Archives.

¹⁴⁵Conrad L. Wirth, “Remarks at the dedication of the visitor center, Gettysburg National Military Park, November 19, 1962,” Quoted in Allaback, Chapter 3, “Completing the Visitor Center,” pg. 2 of 3. Photographs of the dedication, including Neutra in the audience are in Box 43 of the General Historical Photographic Prints collection, GNM P Archives. An invitation to the dedication is in Folder 009.557, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

¹⁴⁶The most complete listing appears in Allaback, Appendix I.

¹⁴⁷Memorandum - A.I.A. award book, RG 23 - Mission 66, Harper’s Ferry. See also Robert E. Koehler, “Our Park Service Serves Architecture Well,” *AIA Journal* 60 (January 1971): 18-25.

Petrified Forest National Park, Mitchell/Giurgola Associates' Wright Brothers National Memorial Visitor Center, and Anshen and Allen's Dinosaur National Monument Visitor Center. The Modern Mission 66 facilities, including the in-house Modernism of Cecil Doty and other Park Service designers, reinvented the visitor services experience for the mid-twentieth century.

Richard Neutra died on April 16, 1970. One obituary described "the last of the pioneers of modern architecture" as a proponent of architecture "bringing man back into harmony with nature and himself."¹⁴⁸ In 1977, the American Institute of Architects posthumously awarded him their annual gold medal. The *AIA Journal* piece related to the award stated that "above all else, Neutra's architecture iterated the interpenetration of inner and outer space. . . . Neutra not only studied each individual client and adapted his own ideas to individual needs; he was also, no doubt, of all 20th century architects, the most interested and knowledgeable in the biological and behavioral sciences."¹⁴⁹ Although most celebrated for his residential work, the significance of Neutra's institutional projects also was acknowledged.

Ultimately the ongoing fascination with Civil War sites in general and this battle in particular meant that the needs of the park rapidly outgrew the new building. Even before the new visitor center was dedicated, the unexcavated portion of the office wing ground floor was expanded into a fallout shelter and storage room. The private Rosensteel Museum, located across the parking lot, was acquired by the Park Service in 1971. GNMP converted this structure into the new visitor center in 1974 and moved the superintendent and other administrative offices to it from the Cyclorama Building in 1986. Currently park personnel are located in a variety of structures throughout the battlefield and town of Gettysburg, with the Cyclorama Building mainly housing interpretative staff.¹⁵⁰

Nearly four decades after its last major restoration, the Cyclorama painting needs to be repaired and rehung according to modern standards of art conservation. The paint surface is flaking, cracked, and tenting in many areas. Recurring problems with humidity control and the HVAC system's air flow around the canvas contributed to its damaged condition. Recent studies also indicate that the current support system does not allow the canvas to hang in its natural parabolic shape, putting stress on the canvas. In addition, the wax/resin coating applied by Nitiewkicz in the early 1960s is unstable and needs to be removed. After restoration to a parabolic shape, the painting circumference and its support system will be too large for the existing rotunda. At the time of HABS documentation, Olin Conservation Inc. had removed two

¹⁴⁸Wolf Von Eckardt, "Richard Neutra - Survival Through Design," *Saturday Review* (6 June 1970): 62-63.

¹⁴⁹Thomas S. Hines, "Richard Neutra, AIA's Gold Medalist," *AIA Journal* 66 (March 1977), 53-54.

¹⁵⁰Unrau, 324.

sections of the painting to begin conservation work.¹⁵¹

The Cyclorama Building was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. In November 1999, the General Management Plan for the park was approved, including demolition of the Cyclorama Building and the Visitor Center in order to recreate the 1863 appearance of Ziegler's Grove and provide new facilities for the museum collections. Personnel and collections located in these buildings, including Philippoteaux's painting, would be housed in a new museum complex located on the edge of the battlefield. The decision followed a controversial May 1999 ruling by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The Advisory Council report "A Problem of Common Ground," framed the question as balancing the future of three historic resources - Gettysburg National Military Park, the Cyclorama painting, and the Cyclorama Building - resulting in "a difficult choice that will inevitably sacrifice an otherwise deserving historical resource in furtherance of the treatment of other paramount historical objectives."¹⁵² The recommendation to endorse the proposed GNMP General Management Plan centered on approval of efforts to move the Cyclorama painting to a new visitor center offering improved conditions for its preservation and display. The Advisory Council declined to reverse its 1977 recommendation that the Cyclorama Building be relocated and the visitor center be removed because they were "intrusions near the cemetery and the climatic scene of the battle."¹⁵³ Opponents of decision, led by the Society of Architectural Historians, maintain that this approach neglects contemporary preservation practice that values multi-layered cultural landscapes. Their application to have the Cyclorama Building designated a National Historic Landmark was rejected in 2000. The Historic American Buildings Survey documentation completed during 2004 was required by Section 106 mitigation requirements for demolition of a National Register-eligible structure as designated in the Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The current National Park Service plans to rebuild and reorient GNMP's visitor facilities reflect a shift in interpretative philosophy from the Mission 66 generation's emphasis on direct contact with key landmarks.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹Typescript, "Conservation Considerations and Recommendations Regarding Exhibition of the Gettysburg Cyclorama," Brigid Sullivan, Chief Conservator, Northeast Regional Conservation Center, (24 November 1998); Section 106 Case Report, Cyclorama Painting *Battle of Gettysburg*, Cyclorama Building, Gettysburg National Military Park, revised 18 February 1999, National Historic Landmark Program files, WASO, Washington, DC.

¹⁵²Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, "A Problem of Common Ground," (10 May 1999), 1. Gettysburg Cyclorama Building file, National Historic Landmark Program, WASO, Washington, D.C..

¹⁵³The 1977 Advisory Council recommendation is found in its report, *A Plan to Preserve the Historic Resources of the Gettysburg Area of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1977), 6-7.

¹⁵⁴On the preservation controversy see Allen Freeman, "Unwelcome Centers: The Park Service Reevaluates Its Modern Buildings from the 1960s," *Preservation* 49 (July-August 1997): 16-17; Dion Neutra, "Gettysburg Visitor Center: Too Old to be Chic; Too Young to Be Revered...Or What Can Happen to Buildings of Merit that are Less than 50 Years Old," *ALArchitect* 5 (February 1998): 5; George F. Will, "A Gettysburg for the Ages," *Washington Post* (11 June 1998): A 24; John Beardsley, "Another Battle at Gettysburg: the Historic Cyclorama Building Should Hold Its Ground," *Landscape Architecture* 90:9 (September 2000): 125, 128; and Christine Madrid French, "The

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This Modernist structure features an three-part asymmetrical form, and large expanses of reinforced concrete, or glass and aluminum. Panels of local fieldstone on the rotunda piers and south wall provide a naturalistic accent. The cylindrical rotunda at the north end of the structure is a solid white ribbed concrete volume set on thin concrete piers and a recessed base. The long rectilinear form of the office wing extends to the south and features aluminum sash windows, concrete panels, and cantilevered ledges, emphasizing the strength of the modern materials and the building's abstract geometric forms. A lower fan-shaped wing containing the auditorium, corridors, and utility rooms creates an angular ribbed concrete form linking the rotunda and office wing. Transparent areas of full height window walls at the east base of the rotunda and lobby area of the office wing contrast with the solidity of the adjacent concrete walls.

2. Condition of fabric: Good to fair. The Cyclorama Building exhibits a high level of historic integrity with only a few minor alterations and nearly all its original features and materials still intact. However, the building also has persistent maintenance problems such as leaking and humidity control that have caused damage in some areas, particularly the Cyclorama gallery.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The rotunda portion of the building is approximately forty feet tall and rises fifty-eight feet above ground level (on a seventeen and a half foot pier) at its tallest point on the east side. The rotunda is roughly 100 feet in diameter. The office wing is approximately twenty-five feet tall, and twenty-five feet wide, not including the exterior ramp. The entire structure is 340 feet long from north to south.

2. Foundations:

The Cyclorama Building has a four-inch reinforced concrete slab on grade foundation poured over six-inches of gravel, as well as a series of reinforced concrete footings around the outer walls. Additional interior footings support the columns in the office wing lobby and the spiral ramp leading to the Cyclorama painting viewing platform in the rotunda. The exterior footings are placed on bedrock or compacted earth; a shift in the building location necessitated redesign of some footings to accommodate uneven rock. The rotunda has fourteen footings supporting exterior piers. The construction plans indicate that these footings were planned to vary in size based on whether they were placed on rock or earth. A spread footing placed on rock is located at the east junction of the rotunda and auditorium wing. Five three-pile footings are located on the northeast side of the rotunda. These more robust footings are placed on earth and support taller piers at a sloped portion of the site. Continuing around to the west side of the rotunda,

there are seven spread footings placed on rock.

The auditorium wing has a six-inch concrete slab in the boiler/mechanical room area, with the standard four-inch slab in the auditorium and hallway. Strip footings support the exterior walls with two additional three-pile footings under the southwest edge of the rotunda. There are three additional spread footings under the south wall of the auditorium wing.

The office wing has strip or continuous footings of reinforced concrete supporting the exterior walls at least four feet below grade. On the west elevation, the strip footing is exposed to create a water table approximately three feet high on the south end, decreasing to a few inches as the grade rises to the north. On the east elevation nine additional spread footings are spaced at regular intervals.¹⁵⁵

3. Walls:

Rotunda - The walls of the rotunda are poured-in-place reinforced concrete cast with thin vertical ribs. The seams between the pours were carefully smoothed and the entire rotunda sprayed with a coat of white "Thoroseal." The Thoroseal finish contains mica chips to create a sparkling white surface. This finish is still evident, although in need of cleaning, particularly where water draining through the three small scuppers at the base of the roof parapet has stained the walls. The base of the rotunda is set back and has ten-inch thick walls. Here the ribbed concrete is painted light brown, helping the base visually recede from the bulk of the rotunda above. A two-story window wall flattens the curve of the rotunda at the east. See "Openings" below for a description of this retractable window wall. A pier sheathed in an oval of stainless steel is located adjacent to south end of the window wall. Thirteen slab-like piers support the rotunda overhang from the northeast around to the west side. These piers vary in width and height from the largest on the northeast side to smallest on the west. This change corresponds with the grade rise to the west, and the decreasing height of the rotunda base. Each pier has a fieldstone veneer extending beyond the concrete core on the two wide sides, with a thin strip of concrete visible at the narrow ends. Construction photographs indicate that the five larger piers corresponding to the three-pile footings on the northeast side consist of three vertical members joined by a horizontal slab at the top, but this structure is concealed by the fieldstone veneer (See Figure 5).

Auditorium wing - The curved south wall of the auditorium wing is eight-inch-thick concrete with vertical ribs, matching the walls of the rotunda. The west wall is covered with horizontal galvanized iron louvers ventilating the main mechanical room. See "Openings" for a description of the retractable east wall.

Office wing - In addition to large expanses of vertically segmented glazing, the walls of the

¹⁵⁵Information regarding foundations was obtained from construction drawings in the Gettysburg National Military Park Archives. See Sheet S-1, Office - Foundation Plan, and Sheet S-3 Rotunda - Foundation Plan. Information regarding foundation revisions appear in sheet R-8 and R-10. See Historical Context section for discussion of the foundation and construction problems.

office wing are six-inch-thick reinforced concrete. Vertical v-shaped grooves appear along the concrete portions of the wall. These grooves are wider on the second floor. An “eyebrow” ledge at the second floor level supports vertical aluminum louvers and emphasizes this upper level while the ground floor office wing walls visually recede to appear as a base for the structure above. The fallout shelter added to the south end of the ground floor in 1962 has unpainted concrete block walls. These walls are visible behind the wire mesh openings of the original wall at the unexcavated area of the ground floor. The south wall of the office wing is ten inches thick and covered with a fieldstone veneer (except on the north side below the ramp on the west elevation). This wall does not have any openings, and extends beyond the edges of the west and east walls, creating a massive, solid appearance in contrast to the glass and aluminum in other areas. A concrete spiderleg extends perpendicular to the wall surface from the top center of the south elevation. This feature is nonstructural and simply emphasizes the drama of the concrete structure and the intersecting planes of the south wall and exterior concrete ramp walls on the west elevation.

4. Structural system, framing:

Rotunda – The reinforced concrete walls of the rotunda are load bearing. In order to allow an unobstructed, 360-degree view of Philipoteaux’s painting, the rotunda has a suspended framing system which combines tapered steel girders and wire cable bridge strands, held in tension around a center post approximately eighteen feet tall and 42-inches wide. This steel frame was fabricated by Bethlehem Steel. The girders are connected to the top of the center post while the cables are hooked to the bottom. The roof structure is divided into ten wedge-shaped bays each with a thirty-six degree curve at the outer wall. A series of steel purlins bolted in place provide cross-bracing between the girders, giving the structure a spider web appearance (See Figure 6). Each of the ten major girders is bolted to a concrete ledge cast along the inside top of the wall. Piers cast around the interior of the concrete wall provide additional structural support. The ceiling of the Cyclorama painting gallery is suspended below this truss system, while the painting viewing platform is supported by concrete columns and the ramp drum. The spiral ramp leading to the gallery is cantilevered from its concrete inner drum.

Auditorium wing - The auditorium wing structural system consists of reinforced concrete slabs supported mainly by the exterior reinforced concrete walls. The auditorium space is not interrupted by any support columns; the projection room sits on cantilevered steel decking.

Office wing – The office wing structural system consists of reinforced concrete posts supporting reinforced concrete floor and ceiling slabs. The east and west walls are non-load bearing. Two rows of posts are arranged from north to south. On the west elevation seven round bushhammered posts appear outside the exterior wall of the office corridor and then inside the lobby. On the east elevation the rectangular *beton brut*-finished posts are hidden on the exterior except for one exposed post near the southeast corner.

5. Terrace, ramp, and overlook deck: On the east elevation at the base of the rotunda window wall there is a low terrazzo terrace extending the interior museum space to the outdoors. The

terrazzo, with brown and red aggregate in a tan matrix, is pitted and spalling in the areas exposed to the elements and in better condition under the overhang of the rotunda. This terrace also creates a partially covered stage for outdoor programs with seating on the lawn; there are three low steps stretching across the entire edge of the terrace. The overhang of the rotunda forms a ceiling in this area that is covered with textured plaster panels. One panel is a corrugated metal hatch to provide easier access to the motor for the window wall.

A long concrete ramp dominates the west office wing elevation of the Cyclorama Building, beginning at the north end of the office wing near the second floor lobby entrance and rising to roof level at the south. It provides access to a rooftop overlook deck along the west half of the office wing. The underside of the ramp has a *beton brut* finish, with the formwork imprints still visible through the paint. The concrete for the ramp floors and overlook deck is tinted reddish brown. Originally the overlook deck was covered with quarry tiles; these tiles were replaced by a new concrete topping in 1978. The ramp is supported by three progressively taller concrete piers recessed beneath and has three foot high concrete walls. The outside of the ramp walls are also painted, with the top and insides bushhammered to expose the black aggregate. There is a metal handrail along the east wall of the ramp that may be a later addition. The ramp walls blend continuously into the parapet walls enclosing the south and east sides of the overlook deck. There is a railing of welded stainless steel tubes arranged vertically along the west and south sides of the overlook deck. These tubes extend below the edge of the overlook deck over an exposed C-channel embedded in the office wing roof, currently painted maroon. Six aluminum plaques placed at the top of the parapet wall around the south end of the ramp and overlook deck give the distance and location of battlefield landmarks.¹⁵⁶ There are seventeen small rectangular indirect lighting coves with metal louver covers along the base of the east overlook deck wall, west ramp wall, and around the top of the ramp.

6. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: East elevation (from north to south)- An emergency exit from the museum space at the base of the rotunda is tucked behind the window wall extension at the north end of the terrace. This opening has a solid wood door painted dark brown. The main entrance into the office wing lobby is located near the intersection of the auditorium and office wing. This opening has a paired glass and steel shop doors, with each door divided horizontally into two lights. Four-inch high aluminum sans serif letters stating "GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK CYCLORAMA CENTER" are affixed to the concrete at the left of this doorway. Two metal exterior bathroom doors feature the same vertical grooves and tan paint as the wall surface. There are no surrounds on these doors, and simple metal handles. Another opening located further down the office wing is masked from view by the wall extension. This opening provides egress from the storage area and was probably added when the ground floor was expanded in 1962.

¹⁵⁶Park officials indicate that these plaques were recycled from the War Department-era observation tower that stood in Zeigler's Gove.

West elevation - The public entrance directly into the second floor office wing lobby has paired glass and steel shop doors with a single pane of glass. Like the east doors, these doors are replacements installed in 1978.¹⁵⁷ A staff emergency exit with a plain wood door is located behind the ramp near the south end of the office corridor.

b. Windows and Louvers: The east and west elevations of the office wing have large expanses of fixed metal sash windows divided vertically from floor to ceiling. The specifications called for glare reducing glass in the window openings of the first floor lobby (east elevation), rotunda window wall (east), and west side of the second floor lobby and office wing. Two pieces of clear plate with a mitred corner were originally located at the southwest corner of the second floor lobby.¹⁵⁸ (See Figure 10) Originally single pane windows in anodized aluminum frames, the lobby windows were replaced with insulated glass in 1978. A band of windows in sections forty-five inches wide and sixty inches high is located on east and west elevations of the office area. Insulated glass was installed in the office wing openings in 1976.¹⁵⁹ An additional clerestory ribbon window (with sections forty-five inches wide and thirty inches high) appears on the ground floor of the east elevation of the office wing. Starting halfway along this facade and continuing to the south, the clerestory opening is covered by metal mesh instead of glazing. A series of large openings also covered by metal mesh is located along the stepped back portion of the east wall. Cinder blocks are visible directly behind the mesh-covered openings, indicating the addition of a fallout shelter in a ground floor area originally left unexcavated.

Vertical aluminum sun louvers are located along the second floor of the east office wing facade. The louvers are mounted between cantilevered concrete ledges (or eyebrows) at the roof and floor level of this story. Each louver is approximately twelve feet tall and twenty-five inches wide, with an alternating batwing shape. Manufactured by the Lemlar Corporation of Los Angeles, California, this installation was changed from manual to electronic rotation during the course of construction. The turning mechanism is still visible at the center of the office wing facade, above the change in the ground floor clerestory. The sections of the louver track are etched with match numbers. The assembly mechanism is labeled with Patent No. 2,830,335.¹⁶⁰ According to park officials, building occupants were dissatisfied with the functioning of the louvers and discontinued their use. Although the louvers are still partially operational, at some time during the 1980s conventional quilted shades were installed that allow more localized

¹⁵⁷Typescript, "Cyclorama Building Maintenance History," (14 April 1999), Richard Segars Research Files, GNMP Archives.

¹⁵⁸Specifications, Division 13 Glass and Glazing, 13-3.

¹⁵⁹"Cyclorama Building Maintenance History," GNMP Archives.

¹⁶⁰See historical context for more information about the sun louvers. The patent for the "Vertical Jalousie Vane Assembly" was issued to Lee Miller on April 15, 1958.

adjustment of light levels.¹⁶¹

c. Movable walls: Two major areas of retractable wall on the east elevation were intended to open the auditorium and base of the cyclorama rotunda to the terrace and lawn area outdoors for larger gatherings. Ferguson Door Company of Los Angeles, California manufactured both movable walls. The east wall of the auditorium (Door No. 12) is sixteen feet high and constructed of wood studs and plywood sheathed with ribbed aluminum. It is divided into four sections - three sliding panels each ten feet, six inches wide that stack over an eleven foot, six inch wide fixed panel. The fixed and two sliding panels are located on the exterior and one sliding panel on the interior of the exhibit space at the base of the rotunda. A seven foot, five inch high aluminum sash window wall located on the east facade of the rotunda meets the solid auditorium wall at an intersecting angle. The window wall (Door No. 13) is divided into lights twenty-four inches wide with flat two-inch wide vertical mullions and tapered, ½-inch wide horizontal mullions, emphasizing the vertical lines of the window wall from the exterior. Like the movable auditorium wall, the window wall is divided into three large movable sections that were designed to slide on small wheels and stack over a fourth fixed panel. Each panel is fifteen feet, ten-and-a-half inches wide. The fixed panel located on the north end extends beyond the wall of the rotunda, creating a hidden niche for the emergency exit (Door No. 14). Currently neither movable wall is operational because of early problems with building settlement. The machinery, tracks, and wheels are still extant.¹⁶²

7. Roof:

a. Shape, covering:

Rotunda - The poured gypsum concrete roof of the rotunda is flat with an one foot, ten inch high parapet hiding utilitarian features from ground-level view. The roof was originally coated with twenty-year coal tar and gravel surface; the roof was resurfaced with a rubber composite in 1978. The roof is now covered with a white rubber membrane installed in 1997. There is a thirty by thirty-six inch scuttle opening allowing access to the rotunda roof from the interior attic catwalk. A flue opening is also located here. A large HVAC unit is located near the scuttle opening; this equipment was added c. 1983. The center post of the rotunda truss system protrudes at the center of the roof and is covered by a round metal cap. The opening along the underside of this cap is covered with screen. Speakers for the carillon donated by the Daughter of Union Veterans in 1965 are attached to the cap.¹⁶³

Auditorium wing - This area also has a flat concrete roof with a nearly five-foot-tall parapet along the curved south edge. Originally a roof top pool was located over the

¹⁶¹Fieldwork observations, Spring-Summer 2004.

¹⁶²See Drawings D-17 and D-18 Door No. 12, and Drawings D-19 and D-20 Doors No. 13 and 14, GNMP Archives.

¹⁶³“Cyclorama Building Maintenance History,” GNMP Archives. A wall-mounted plaque in the first floor of the rotunda indicates that the memorial carillon was dedicated on April 10, 1965.

auditorium, filled via a cascade from the cantilevered north edge of the office wing roof pool. Now the roof surface is gravel and tar.

Office wing - The flat concrete roof of the office wing was originally divided into a long reflecting pool on the east side and the overlook deck at the west side. A section of this roof is cantilevered over the auditorium wing on the north. Both roof top pools experienced almost immediate leaking problems, probably due to insufficient caulking by the contractor, causing these features to be removed and the roof resurfaced in 1978. Currently this portion of the roof is covered with gravel and tar.

b. Eaves/Drainage: The rotunda has three small scuppers along the base of the parapet. The scupper drains are still in place, but water now gathers at a low point closer to the center of the roof. One of the original detail drawings, D-26 Flashing to Roof Over Drum, indicates that the scuppers were a secondary drainage system paired with an integral roof drain located at this low point of the roof pitch. Findings of Fact for Change Order No. 19 states that the scuppers were raised and covered with wire mesh since they were "to be used only as an emergency measure and it is desired to prevent the water from going through the scuppers with the likelihood of staining the brilliant white exterior finish of the Cyclorama wall."¹⁶⁴ There are stainless steel box gutters along the east edge of the office wing roof and above the movable wall on the east side of the auditorium wing. These gutters were probably added during the late 1970s/early 1980s after the roof pools were discontinued.

8. Other exterior features:

a. Water fountains: There are two exterior water fountains - one between the exterior bathroom doors on the east elevation and one at the base of the ramp on the west elevation. Like the interior examples, these original bronze water fountains are cantilevered from the wall and have a butterfly wing shape. There is a small concrete ledge cantilevered four inches above the ground next to each water fountain intended as a step for children.

b. Public Address System: There is a rectangular hole in the rotunda wall over the terrace that held a speaker for the public address system. The speaker is no longer present and the opening is covered with screen.

c. Exterior Lighting: There are two spot lights attached to the parapet on the east side of the rotunda. A series of downlights with metal cone shades is located under the eyebrow ledge at the second floor level of the east elevation. These lights appear on the north half of the facade near the lobby and exterior bathroom entrances. Additional metal downlights appear on the underside of the cantilevered north edge of the office wing

¹⁶⁴Findings of Fact, Change Order No. 19, Contract No. 14-10-529-124, (28 September 1961), Box 1, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

roof. On the west elevation, a strip of fluorescent lights with a metal fin cover continues from the interior of the second floor lobby through the southwest corner window to the exterior.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The Cyclorama Building is divided into two main levels, with additional spaces in the upper area of the rotunda. Horizontally the building is divided by administrative and public functions, with the offices and storage area of the office wing in the south half of the building and lobbies, auditorium, exhibit space and Cyclorama gallery in the north.

The efficient flow of park visitors through the building was carefully planned. Visitors entering into the ground level east lobby would find an information desk and restrooms to their left (the information desk has been shifted to the west wall of this space). A wide hallway on the right led to the auditorium and exhibit areas. While waiting to view the Cyclorama painting, visitors could watch an orientation film in the auditorium or view the exhibit cases around the outer walls of the rotunda area. A spiral ramp in the center of the rotunda provided access to the Cyclorama gallery. After viewing the painting, visitors traveled halfway back down the ramp and crossed a bridge to the second floor hallway. From here they could rest in the second floor lobby, examine additional displays, or proceed out the west entrance and up the exterior ramp to the overlook deck. From the roof top overlook visitors saw the actual battlefield landscape from the same point of view as the painting. Stairs in the lobby area allowed variation of movement, but the majority of visitors were expected to flow through the Visitor Center in this manner.

2. Stairways and ramps: A dog-leg stair with open risers is located in the southwest corner of the lobbies. The terrazzo treads are supported by a metal frame welded to a diagonal support pole. Each tread of the top run of the stair is bolted to the west wall. The stair railing is steel tubes painted gray with a gray plastic hand rail. Plastic extensions have been added at the east side of the stair rail to extend the poles to the ground and block access to the area beneath the stair. A concrete planter is located at the stair landing and at the east side of the stair opening on the second floor.

The defining feature of the rotunda exhibit area is the dramatic spiral concrete ramp leading into the Cyclorama painting gallery. Beginning on the first floor adjacent to the hallway at the south side of the rotunda, the ramp proceeds clockwise up to one and half turns to the gallery entrance and then continues another half turn to the viewing platform. The ten bushhammered concrete columns that support the Cyclorama viewing platform surround the cantilevered ramp, but are not connected to it. The outer edge of the ramp is enclosed by a cage of stainless steel tubes. A round metal handrail is mounted on the inside of the cage. There is a wide opening in the cage at the bridge to the second floor hall. The inner wall of the ramp is covered with thin rectangular dark blue and dark brown Japanese ceramic tiles arranged vertically in alternating rows that subtly echo the spiral of the ramp. A thinner handrail with a gray plastic cover is mounted on this wall. Inside the Cyclorama gallery, the ceramic tile continues to the end of the inner ramp wall. The outer handrail also continues around the top of the low viewing platform wall. The

concrete floor of the ramp is dyed brown. A two-story space inside the ramp drum contains offices, built-in safes, the entrance to the former ticket office, and double-layer wood storage loft.

A wall-mounted metal ladder starts at the southwest corner of the second floor electrical room and provides access to gallery level from behind the painting. Another taller metal ladder from this level provides access to the attic space above the Cyclorama gallery and to the roof scuttle.

3. Flooring: Terrazzo flooring, in complementary shades of either maroon or tan, is used in the first floor lobby, rotunda exhibit area, restrooms, and both first and second floor public hallways. Vinyl tile appears in the east side of the second floor lobby (alternating rows of tan/ivory), the projection room (dark brown), and the office, storage, and break room areas on the first floor (dark brown inside the Cyclorama ramp, tan in the other areas). The floor in the Cyclorama gallery is concrete covered with carpet. A raised subfloor with carpet was added to the office area in 1983.¹⁶⁵ Exposed concrete appears in the mechanical and electrical rooms.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The concrete walls of the Cyclorama Building exhibit a variety of finishes. In the main hallways through the auditorium wing, the concrete walls are painted and have *beton brut* finish characterized by visible imprints from the vertical form work boards. The curved wall at the north side of the lobby is cast with vertical ribs, creating a continuation of the exterior wall of the auditorium wing on the interior. The west wall of the second floor hall is also cast with vertical ribs. Curved slabs of concrete forming the backdrop for the rostrum in the exhibit area are bushhammered to exposed the dark aggregate. A *beton brut* concrete wall at the north edge of the rotunda window wall has a charcoal gray coating. The walls behind the Cyclorama painting and in the mechanical and electrical rooms are unfinished. Cinder block walls appear in the extended area of the first floor storage room.

Dark brown Masonite paneling, perforated with acoustic holes, covers the walls in the auditorium and above the exhibit cases and Cyclorama ramp in the rotunda area. Ash wood paneling covers the rotunda side of the pivoting auditorium wall. Plastic “sandwich panel[ing]” with a honeycomb pattern that allows 45% light transference is located along the outer wall of the ramp in the Cyclorama gallery.¹⁶⁶

The exterior walls in the administrative offices are covered with heavy fabric while the interior partitions are modular wood panels covered with vinyl. The specifications refer to “flush movable type demountable partitions.”¹⁶⁷ A high wainscot of terrazzo matching the floors appears in the restrooms, with plaster above. Plaster ceilings are used throughout the public areas of the building while acoustical tile drop ceilings are prevalent in the purpose-built office and storage spaces.

¹⁶⁵“Cyclorama Building Maintenance History,” GNMP Archives.

¹⁶⁶Specifications, Division 25 Plastic Panels, 25-1.

¹⁶⁷Specifications, Division 22 Demountable Partitions, 22-1.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The typical interior doorway has a painted metal frame with a matching solid wood door and utilitarian metal knob. The door between the second floor lobby and office corridor has a fixed square window and a sidelight. This door and frame retain their original lemon yellow paint. Other doors painted lemon yellow (offices, break room) or bright orange (2nd floor lobby mechanical room, rest rooms) also retain their original color scheme. The auditorium, main mechanical room, and projection room all have double doors. Entrances to mechanical spaces in the auditorium wing and rotunda are installed flush, without molding, and have recessed finger pull latches.

The interior of the large motorized door at the east wall of the auditorium (Door No. 12) is finished with the same perforated Masonite as the south and west walls. The edges of each panel have solid hardwood molding. Another motorized door (Door No. 20, also manufactured by Ferguson Door Co.) forms the north wall of the auditorium. This door was designed to pivot open to the northwest, further opening the auditorium to the rostrum area. The door is seventeen feet, five inches high and twenty feet wide. It is constructed of wood studs and five-eighths-inch gypsum board, and sheathed with one-quarter-inch ash plywood panels. The auditorium side of this wall has been altered to hold a wall mounted projection screen.¹⁶⁸

b. Windows: The Cyclorama Building's original windows were fixed sash anodized aluminum and glass industrial windows; later repairs and replacements have utilized windows very similar in character. Originally the wall at the south end of the second floor lobby, over the stair, was filled with one large pane of glass. This window was replaced with vertical sections similar to the rest of the lobby; probably in 1978 when insulated glass was installed in the lobby windows.¹⁶⁹ Industrial sash windows of smaller dimensions appear in the rest of the office wing. A railing was added across the center of the windows in the second floor lobby in 1963.¹⁷⁰

6. Decorative features and trim:

a. Rostrum area: At the east side of the rotunda Neutra included a rostrum, or speaker's platform, that would provide a location for speeches, particularly with the movable walls opened to allow a view of this area from the auditorium seating and exterior terrace. A raised podium surrounded by a cage of stainless steel tubes is mounted at the south side of a curved, free-standing bushhammered concrete wall. Concrete stairs to access the rostrum are cantilevered from the back of this wall. A lower curved slab of bushhammered concrete is located to the south, concealing the underside of the ramp. A slab of polished dark granite stands a few inches above the ground on slim steel supports

¹⁶⁸Specifications, Division 8 Finish Carpentry and Millwork, 8-6, 8-7, Drawings D-21 and D-22 Door No. 20.

¹⁶⁹"Cyclorama Building Maintenance History," GNMP Archives.

¹⁷⁰Park officials indicate that this change was made for safety reasons.

perpendicular to the curved walls just behind the rostrum.¹⁷¹ The polished slab provides a contrast to the concrete and also shields the view of the rostrum steps. Silver nickel letters spelling the final words of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address "...SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH" are mounted on the larger curved wall to the north of the rostrum.¹⁷² A large bronze bust of Lincoln sits below these words on a box-like platform; this statue was installed later and is not part of the original decorative scheme.

b. Bench: Another built-in decorative feature in the rotunda area is the polished bushhammered concrete bench that curves around the base of the Cyclorama ramp on the north and west. An original diorama representing a dry creek bed after the battle is located behind the bench and contains sticks, rocks, and broken gun carriages.

c. Exhibit cases: A series of diorama and exhibit cases are located along the outer wall on the north and west, including a low platform to display a cannon. These cases are covered with tan and maroon vinyl in order to complement the color scheme in the rotunda. Free-standing panels mounted on metal legs are located periodically along the bench (three total) and at either end of the exhibit case area. Although Neutra expressed great interest in overseeing the design of the museum display cases, it appears that ultimately National Park Service Museum Branch personnel were responsible for the design.

d. Signs: Original signs in the building are the sans serif aluminum letters directly mounted on the door to the office wing (OFFICES), on the Cyclorama ramp near the original ticket window opening (<CYCLORAMA PAINTING), and the double-sided BATTLEFIELD OVERLOOK AND WALKING TOUR on a thin plastic panel mounted from the second floor lobby ceiling in front of the west exterior door. The font is referred to as "Modern Narrow Face" in the specifications.¹⁷³ Additional signs with similar sans serif aluminum letters mounted on brown Bakelite panels were probably added during the 1960s.

e. Bridge transition: A bridge consisting of thin closely spaced stainless steel bars connects the curving edge of the Cyclorama ramp with the cantilevered straight edge of the concrete second floor hallway. The low wall on the east side of the bridge is a continuation of these stainless steel bars, which connect to a low concrete wall at the transition to concrete. The west wall of the bridge is an asymmetrical polygon of frosted glass(referred to in specifications as a glass mural) attached to steel hardware painted dark brown. The thick steel handrail along the outer side of the Cyclorama cage continues along the top of the west side of the bridge and just beyond the stainless

¹⁷¹A letter from Donald Nutt at EODC to Dion Neutra (2 August 1960) refers to this slab as Granux-brand "Opalescent Ruby-Ebony." See Folder 6, Box 3, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹⁷²The specifications refer to the font used here as "Flat Face Classic." Specifications, Division 20 Miscellaneous, 20-2.

¹⁷³Specifications, Division 20 Miscellaneous, 20-2.

portion of the east.¹⁷⁴

f. North side of second floor lobby: This area features a small stair with eight steps down to the second floor hall and a decorative concrete planter at its east side, coated with gray-multi paint, a type of enamel with a subtle speckled texture. A mechanical wheel chair lift was added to the west side of the stair in 1984.¹⁷⁵ A rail of steel poles is located along the rest of north side of the lobby, with a open area down to the first floor lobby.

g. Wall clocks: Hardwired wall clocks are located on an interior wall of both lobbies near the hall to the office wing. The clocks have aluminum hands and face markings, with strips of aluminum designating the number positions. Neither of these clocks functions any longer and one of them is missing its hands.

7. Hardware: Most of the extant knobs and hinges appear to be part of the original 1960s construction. These are generally utilitarian in appearance.

8. Mechanical Equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The Cyclorama Building was constructed with a forced air heating and air conditioning system that operated with a series of large fans and compressors in the various mechanical room areas. Heat was provided by an oil-fueled hot water boiler. The original HVAC specifications called for the building to be heated to 70 degrees with 35 to 40% relative humidity in the winter and cooled to 80 degrees with 50% relative humidity during the summer. In mild weather, the system would circulate 100% outside air.¹⁷⁶ At the time an air conditioned Park Service facility was unusual, while commercial structures had only begun to commonly include air conditioning during the 1950s. The system experienced repeated chiller failures during the late 1960s.¹⁷⁷ A new rooftop HVAC unit was added in 1983.¹⁷⁸

b. Lighting:

Rotunda - The architects employed indirect lighting throughout this area as a way to accent its geometric forms and unadorned materials; many of these features still function but are no longer in use. This lighting was a key feature of the building's original design and intended to create a solemn, yet warm atmosphere in the rotunda. A series of

¹⁷⁴See Drawings D-44 Transition Plate and Handrail Details, D-45 Transition Plate Details, and D-46 Transition Plate, Glass Railing Panel and Bracket Details, June 1, 1959.

¹⁷⁵Typescript, "Cyclorama Building Maintenance History," (14 April 1999), Richard Segars Research Files, GNMP Archives.

¹⁷⁶Specifications, Division 300 Air Conditioning, Heating and Ventilating, 300-3.

¹⁷⁷See Trip Report, Wayne P. Veach, Mechanical Engineer, Division of Maintenance, (August 18, 1966); Memorandum, Acting Assistant Regional Director to Superintendent, Gettysburg (21 April 1967); and Memorandum, Regional Chief of Maintenance to Superintendent, Gettysburg (22 July 1968), copies in Richard Segars Research Files, GNMP Archives.

¹⁷⁸"Air conditioning system replacement, Visitor center and Cyclorama Building," June 1983, Folder 13 of 13, Drawer E, MC 11 - uncataloged maps and plans, GNMP Archives.

pendant light fixtures hanging from thin poles are located over the bench around the base of the Cyclorama ramp. These fixtures have wide circular plastic covers and an aluminum base covering the incandescent bulb. The ramp is also lit by a pair of neon tubes at the ceiling around the top of the ramp cage (no longer functional) and fluorescent tubes covered with an opaque white plastic housing around the bottom of the inner ramp wall. Additional fluorescent cove lighting is located around the outer wall of the rotunda at the top of the exhibit cases and in a recess near the ceiling. Additional object lighting was provided in the exhibit cases and by a few metal cone spot lights mounted under the ledge above the cases. Additional halogen light fixtures have been added in this area. Another addition to the rotunda lighting is series of round glass globe sconces placed around the Cyclorama ramp cage (attached to the bushhammered columns), probably during the 1970s.

Auditorium wing: The house lights in the auditorium are wall sconces with tubular aluminum covers. A ceiling-mounted fluorescent fixture is located in the first and second floor hallways and continues into the lobby area. This fixture has a metal fin cover. An identical fixture located in a cove along the west wall of the second floor lobby continues through the window at the southwest corner to the exterior.

Office wing: The administrative and storage areas here have rectangular fluorescent ceiling lighting integrated into the drop ceiling. Plain circular ceiling fixtures with white plastic covers are located in places with plaster ceilings such as the lobby corridors to the office area and the restrooms.

c. Plumbing: The Cyclorama Building was equipped with modern plumbing fixtures typical for a mid-twentieth century public building. Most of the plumbing is vertically grouped in the space between the lobbies and the rest of the office wing. The public restrooms on the ground floor each have a row of ceramic toilets separated by metal stalls and sinks on the opposite wall.¹⁷⁹ The men's restroom also has several wall-mounted urinals. On the floor above, individual men's and women's restrooms for Park Service personnel are located just inside the door to the office corridor. A small utility sink is located in the janitor's closets on both the second and first floor, near the restrooms.¹⁸⁰ Bronze butterfly-wing shaped water fountains, like the ones outside, are located at the south side of the lobbies. Fire hoses are also provided in the halls near the restrooms, at the control booth in the Cyclorama gallery, and in the Auditorium. A kitchen sink is provided in the first floor breakroom; one hot water heater is located here and additional units in the main mechanical room. The plumbing installation also originally included piping and filter for the reflecting pools and pneumatic pump; these features have been removed.

¹⁷⁹All restroom fixtures were American Standard brand in white vitreous china "Afton" toilets, "Dresslyn" sinks, and "Washal" urinals. See Specifications, Division 200 Plumbing, 200-29.

¹⁸⁰The utility sinks are American Standard "Argo" in cast iron with an "acid-resisting enamel inside." See Specifications, Division 200 Plumbing, 200-30.

d. Machinery for sun louvers: A small electric motor connected to rack and pinion gearing moves the aluminum louvers, which are connected along an aluminum channel at the top and bottom. This motor mounted on the exterior eyebrow ledge behind the louvers at roughly the middle of the installation. A control switch panel and separate metal box, presumably containing a manual crank mechanism, are located below the window in one of the offices.¹⁸¹

e. Machinery for motorized doors/window wall: The machinery to control each of the movable wall features is located in an attic space above the auditorium and the southeast side of the rotunda first floor. This space is accessed via a wall-mounted ladder and opening on the east wall of the Electrical Room on the second floor. The furthest motor, located above the north side of the window wall, is also accessible through a corrugated metal ceiling panel over the exterior terrace. The controls for all three walls are located on a short perpendicular wall in the auditorium that forms part of the fixed stop for the pivoting wall. These button and knob controls were activated by a key. The specifications described the motors as “a hoist duty type, high slip (8 to 13%), high torque, intermittent duty, helical geared reduction head motors.”¹⁸²

The machinery for Door No. 20, the pivoting north wall of the auditorium, consists of a large wheel and piston (described in the specifications as a pair of spur gears) connected to chain-driven gears and an electric motor. Movement of the spur gears pulled the wall open towards the northwest; this equipment was mounted on an I-beam for bracing and support. The control boxes for this motor are labeled Cutler-Hamer and Federal Pacific Electric Company. A small auxiliary motor and a manual crank override were provided. The specifications called for a door rim speed of 15 feet per minute.

The machinery for Door No. 12 on the east side of the auditorium is located above the north end of the door. Here the electric motor is connected directly to five chain-driven gears. One chain connects to the motor and another to the auxiliary motor while the remaining three each move one of the sliding wall panels. These small sections of chain are linked vertically to a small gear at the top of the wall, while the rest of the mechanism is hidden beneath a plate at the top of the wall. Presumably this plate covers long horizontal chains similar to those for the window wall. The window wall, or Door No. 13, also has a chain-driven mechanism, with the motor located above the north end. Here the long, horizontally-oriented chain drives are visible in wooden tracks, with the longest section of chain moving the furthest window wall panel on the south. The specifications indicate that the “endless chains” of both sliding doors/walls were geared to a speed of 30

¹⁸¹See Specifications, Drawing D-6 Vertical Section Through Louvers East Elevation; See Sheet A-3 of the June 1, 1959 drawing set for original designation of office, GNMP Archives. Traveling south along the corridor from the second floor lobby, this office is the second one.

¹⁸²Specifications, Division 24 Motorized Doors, 24-5.

feet per minute.¹⁸³ Like the pivoting wall, manual crank override was provided for both sliding walls in case of a power failure.

f. Cyclorama painting lighting and audio equipment: A dimmer control lighting system was installed in the Cyclorama gallery, with a control panel located at the viewing platform and another in the ticket booth at the base of the ramp drum. An intercom connected these locations as well. The lighting system was synchronized with the audio show interpreting the painting. The auditorium also had a system of dimmers for the house lights that were to be synchronized with the audiovisual presentations.¹⁸⁴ Speakers for the presentations and announcements are mounted into the ceiling of the Cyclorama gallery, rotunda exhibit area, auditorium, and lobbies.¹⁸⁵

g. Automatic doors for Cyclorama gallery: The double doors at the top of the Cyclorama ramp, entering the painting gallery (Door No. 45), have an automatic control system. The system was a "Norton Concealed Electric Door Operator...with surface type approach and safety mats."¹⁸⁶ Additional controls for this door were placed at the Cyclorama ticket office and gallery control panel. The basic function of this system still continues. The specifications indicate that the safety mat on the entrance side also could be linked to a counting mechanism to track the number of visitors.¹⁸⁷

9. Original furnishings: Some of the furniture originally located in the first floor lobby is now located in the second floor lobby or near the window wall in the rotunda.

10. Hanging system for Cyclorama Painting - The wood timber hanging system and catwalk located behind the upper portion of the painting seems to be a result of collaboration between the Neutra and Alexander firm and the Park Service's Museum Branch. Revision drawing R-32, dated August 16, 1960, shows the "painting support bracket" bolted into the concrete exterior wall of the rotunda. The drawing indicates that the Museum Branch was responsible for the fasteners used to hold the upper edge of the canvas.¹⁸⁸

D. Site:

1. General Character: The Cyclorama Building's site slopes down from west to east, utilizing both the natural slope of Cemetery Ridge and excavation intended to fit the structure into the side of the slope. Extra earth from the excavation was used to create a berm at the south edge of the parking lot. The site also rises sharply to the north around the rotunda. Several trees in the adjacent Ziegler's Grove, stone walls, and boulders were removed to prepare the site for

¹⁸³Specifications, Division 24 Motorized Doors, 24-5.

¹⁸⁴Specifications, Division 400 Electrical, 400-16, 400-17.

¹⁸⁵Specifications, Division 400 Electrical, 400-17.

¹⁸⁶Specifications, Division 401 Automatic Ramp Door Operation, 401-1, 401-2.

¹⁸⁷See Drawing D-50 Elevation and Detail Sections of Ramp Doors 45, June 1, 1959.

¹⁸⁸Specifications, Division 8 Finish Carpentry and Millwork, 8-7; Drawing R-32, Folder 9, Box 14, Series II, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

construction. Some boulders were left in place near the east side of the rotunda. The rotunda is surrounded by the mature trees of Ziegler's Grove on the north and west. The east side of the building features the lawn in front of the exterior terrace and curving concrete pathways from the parking lot. The relatively level ground at the west terrace leads to the exterior battlefield overlook ramp and the path to Hancock Avenue and the High Water Mark walking tour.

The site plan contractor was E.D. Plummer Sons of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.¹⁸⁹ When construction of the Cyclorama Building was contemplated during the mid-1950s, the Ziegler's Grove site had already been under consideration as the location of a new park museum for a number of years. During 1961 the steel observation tower built by the War Department at Ziegler's Grove in 1896 was demolished. Another War Department-era structure, the Hancock Avenue gate from Taneytown Road near the National Cemetery, also was removed when the new parking and access roads changed the park road alignment through Ziegler's Grove. This gate consisted of granite pillars topped with bronze eagles and flanked by low, curved granite walls.¹⁹⁰ The realignment of Hancock Avenue also necessitated the removal or relocation of a number of historic monuments and markers.¹⁹¹

2. Walkways and hardscape features: Originally the pathways and portions of the entrance terraces were covered with flagstone; these features were redone in concrete in 1984.¹⁹² Random ashlar retaining walls appear at the parking lot berm and along the pathway that approaches the east entrance from Meade's Headquarters. On the west a rebuilt stone wall partially continues onto the terrace. Park officials indicate that this historic stone wall originally served as the boundary between the Peter Fry and Abraham Brian properties. Wood slat benches on wedge-shaped concrete piers are located near both entrances to the building.

3. Plantings: At the time of completion, two mature trees were located near the west elevation. Now this area contains rows of fruit trees suggesting a historic orchard. Evergreen shrubs appear near the mechanical room grates on the west and outlining the former location of the reflecting pool near the east entrance. This pool was removed in 1989.¹⁹³ Underbrush and small trees have been allowed to grow close to the south wall and exterior ramp.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural drawings:

Several diazo print copies of the design drawing set from June 1, 1959 are in the Gettysburg National Military Park archives. This set includes architectural, structural, mechanical,

¹⁸⁹A series of progress photographs taken by E.D. Plummer Sons on August 29, 1961 and June 6, 1962 are located in Box 40, General Photographic Collection, GNMP Archives (Photographs 4C00001A through 4C0001P). Two ariel photographs from 1973 also provide useful views of the Cyclorama Building's site. See Photographs 26S-1016 and 26S-1017, Box 104, General Photographic Collection, GNMP Archives.

¹⁹⁰Holmes, 128.

¹⁹¹Park officials indicate that seven monuments and markers were effected by the road realignment.

¹⁹²"Cyclorama Building Maintenance History," GNMP Archives.

¹⁹³"Cyclorama Building Maintenance History," GNMP Archives.

plumbing, and electrical drawings (See Cyclorama Maps and Drawings Collection, Neutra and Alexander drawing sets, [uncataloged]). The original specifications and detail drawings, and later maintenance-related drawings are also located in the GNMP Archives. No as-built drawings have been located.

B. Early Views:

Construction photographs and early views can be found in the General Photographic Collection, GNMP Archives, including snapshots taken by the contractor. Additional early views, including, some color slides, are available in the Thaddeus Longstreth Papers at the Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. A set of photographs taken by photographer Lawrence Williams shortly after the building was completed were published in the monograph, *Richard Neutra, 1961-66: Buildings and Projects*, W. Boesiger, editor.

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D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

While this report utilizes copies of some materials, thorough research in the Richard Joseph Neutra Papers, 1925-1970 (Collection 1179, Manuscripts Division, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles), could yield additional information. Another potential source is the Robert Evans Alexander Papers, 1935-1993 (Collection 3087, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Carl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York).

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Gettysburg Cyclorama Building was documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS, Paul Dolinsky, Chief) (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, HABS/HAER/HALS Division, John Burns, Acting Manager) during 2004. The project was sponsored by Gettysburg National Military Park (GNMP, John Latschar, Superintendent). Field recording and measured drawings were completed by Mark Schara, HABS Architect; Steve Utz, HABS Summer Field Team Supervisor; Brian Carnahan (University of Arkansas); Robyn Chrabascz (Roger Williams University); Amanda Loughlin (Kansas State University); and Noelle McManus (Edinburgh College of Art, ICOMOS/Great Britain). HABS Historian Lisa Pfueller Davidson served as project historian. HABS Photographer Jack E. Boucher completed large format photographs. Assistance was provided by Winona Peterson, Historian, Resource Planning Division, GNMP and the staff of GNMP and Eastern National located in the Cyclorama Building.

APPENDIX I: Selected Design/Construction Timeline:

27 January 1956- meeting.	Mission 66 program presented to President Eisenhower at a cabinet
28 April 1958- visitor center.	Neutra and Alexander completes first design proposal for Gettysburg
1 June 1959-	Final design drawings submitted by Neutra and Alexander.
August 1959-	Excavation contractor, Maitland Bros., working on site.
25 August 1959-	Invitation for construction bids issued by Superintendent Myers.
30 September 1959-	Construction contracts awarded.
1 December 1959-	“As of this date no construction has actually taken place since the rock formations in the cyclorama area are still not removed by the grading contractor.” ¹⁹⁴
29 December 1959-	Area of the drum (130 ft. in diameter) excavated to an elevation of approximately 597 and opening made for most of the spread footings. Two test piles partially driven. ¹⁹⁵
February 1960-	All rotunda/drum footings and most of the office wing footings poured during this month. Questions were raised regarding inspection controls for the concrete plant. ¹⁹⁶
March 1960-	“Poor concrete continues to bother the project.” Exterior ramp and south office wing wall footings poured. Work proceeded on some of the office building and drum columns. ¹⁹⁷
31 March and	

¹⁹⁴Memorandum, “Visit to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania,” Longstreth to Neutra, (1 December 1959), Folder 009.560, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

¹⁹⁵Letter, Robert J. Stickel, Civil Engineer to Neutra and Alexander, (8 January 1960), Folder , Box 2, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

¹⁹⁶Architect’s Monthly Report - Gettysburg Visitors Center, (February 1960), Folder 009.564, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

¹⁹⁷Architect’s Monthly Report - Gettysburg Visitors Center, (March 1960), Folder 009.564, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

- 1 April 1960- Site inspection, including sample stone veneer panels. Richard Neutra and John Cabot participating.
- April 1960- Work continues on foundations and columns, with corrections for poor concrete in earlier work. Ribbed south wall of auditorium wing begun and results inspected on April 28th.¹⁹⁸
- May 1960¹⁹⁹- Started construction of parts of office wing and drum walls after finishing replacement of defective footings and columns. Excavation for transformer vault.
- June 1960- Half of rotunda wall complete to full height, other half in progress. Continued construction of office wing walls, including interior corridor. Transformer vault nearly complete.
- July 1960- Exterior and interior walls partially complete in all sections of the building, pouring of floor slabs continues. Office wing east wall complete up to “eyebrow” between first and second floor. Exterior ramp and round lobby columns poured. Sewer line and electrical conduit in place.
- August 1960- Continued progress on pouring of exterior and interior walls. Start pouring inner ramp columns. Some bush-hammering commenced on office wing round columns. Starting to place and rough in electrical and plumbing.
- September 1960- Outer wall of drum completed to full height. Form work in place for core of rotunda and Cyclorama ramp. “Commenced center steel shoring to support spindle of Cyclorama roof framing. The framework of this shoring is independent of Storage Room drum and will have to be kept in place until entire Cyclorama roof framing is in place and in tension, necessitating delay in construction of inner drum. The purpose is to enclose the building before bad weather.”
- October 1960- “More progress was shown during this month than any month previous.” Highlights include completion of roof slab for office and auditorium wings, progress on Cyclorama ramp and exhibit area ceiling, and six steel roof girders and intermediate beams in place. Backfill nearly complete around west side of building, except drum side. Entire concrete parapet of

¹⁹⁸Architect's Monthly Report - Gettysburg Visitors Center, (April 1960), Folder 009.564, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn.

¹⁹⁹Architect's Monthly Report - Gettysburg Visitors Center, (May 1960-December 1961), Folder 009.559, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UPenn. Unless specified otherwise, this citation also refers to information in the May 1960 to December 1961 time period.

office building viewing deck completed.

- November 1960- Structural steel for Cyclorama roof in place, but cables not yet tightened. Interior columns and exhibit area ceiling complete, inner drum still in progress. Mechanical equipment moved in. "Stonework commenced on the northerly piers of the Cyclorama in the least conspicuous areas."
- 1 December 1960- Site visit by Richard J. Neutra.
- 5-6 December 1960- Site visit by structural engineers to inspect structural steel.
- December 1960- Structural steel complete and shoring removed, but weather delayed pouring of rotunda roof deck. Continued pouring of inner drum and exterior ramp (in spite of problems with location of exterior ramp). Progress on mechanical ducts, door frames and column bush-hammering in office wing.
- January 1961- Severe winter weather conditions. Rotunda roof poured. Work on inner drum wall and Cyclorama gallery platform.
- February 1961- Cyclorama painting scaffolding and catwalk installed. Cyclorama viewing platform and interior ramp poured. Office building round column bush-hammering completed, started on rotunda columns.
- 27 March 1961- Site visit by Richard J. Neutra.
- March 1961- Exhibit slab and bench poured. Ceiling lath and plastering in Cyclorama gallery, rail of platform poured. Stone work on Cyclorama piers continuing intermittently because of lack of materials. Roofing membrane for auditorium wing reflecting pool being installed. HVAC and plumbing systems inspected by engineers. Consultation from engineer on electrical layout.
- April 1961- Stonework on south wall of office wing 3/4 complete. Sandblasting of exterior walls commenced, but no hand-rubbing of rough construction joints as required. Insulation of ducts plumbing, etc. continuing. Plastering continuing in exhibit area. Installation of electrical conduits progressing.
- 25 May 1961- Site visit by Richard J. Neutra.
- May 1961- Ceramic tile on inner drum ramp installed. Insulation continuing. Lathing and plastering of exterior soffits and numerous interior spaces progressing. Top track of sliding doors, motor hangers and motors installed. Problems with condensation/spots on Cyclorama gallery ceiling (lack of ventilation). "Messrs. Cabot and Neutra agreed to certain color modifications, in order to improve the aesthetic character of the finished building."
- June 1961- Two thirds of glass in office wing installed. Masonite paneling around

rotunda interior installed. Terrazzo installation in office wing and corridors partially complete. Installation of mechanical equipment continuing. Grinding and bush-hammering of construction joints and other irregularities and patching of ribbing and pockets continued on outer surface of Cyclorama drum. Scaffolding required for inspection and application of Thoroseal. Hand rails for interior ramp partially installed.

- July 1961- Entrance reflecting pool and exterior terrace for rostrum area commenced. Terrazzo flooring in southern part of rotunda commenced. Installation of cove lighting, conduits, and duct work continued. Installation of stainless steel cage around interior ramp commenced. Landscaping work by National Park Service around building commenced. Ziegler's Grove observation tower removed.
- August 1961- Interior plastering continues. Cyclorama ramp cage and exhibit area cove lighting installed. Terrazzo 3/4 complete. Grinding of museum bench being performed. Grey glass of office wing windows and doors installed. Test areas of Thoroseal on exterior of drum, unsatisfactory results. Shifting of overlook deck slab and lack of caulking here and under window sills causing leaking.
- 21 September 1961- Site visit by Richard J. Neutra.
- September 1961- "During this time progress on construction was excessively slow although weather conditions were favorable." Terrazzo complete in rotunda area except exterior terrace. Window walls and doors installed in lobbies. Transition bridge installed. Doors #13 and #20 (window wall and pivoting wall) were received and installed, and adjustment in progress. Thoroseal coating applied to lower drum behind piers. Strip lighting in upper lobby installed. Treads of stair #1 (lobby) removed and replaced to correct uneven risers and back of tread lip.
- 2 October 1961- Site visit by Robert E. Alexander.
- October 1961- Inspections by a Congressional Investigation Committee and EODC officials. "During this month many finishing operations of the project were in progress and the work was greatly excellerated [sic.] in order to have the building ready in November for partial occupancy by the Park Service."
- November 1961- Finishing deadline extended to December 12th. "Operations included finishing of surface treatment, painting, installation of doors and hardware, miscellaneous equipment and special items, plumbing fixtures and accessories, fixtures, . . . etc.." Trouble getting an even application of Thoroseal coating on exterior of drum; contractor to consult with manufacturer. "Quarry tile of Viewing Deck was laid but not yet caulked with polysulphide for full water-proof protection at cove. Roof pool not yet caulked." Stainless steel rail for overlook deck installed.
- 6 December 1961- Site visit by Richard J. Neutra.

- December 1961- Final inspection scheduled for January 8-10, 1962. Final coating of Thoroclear applied to drum exterior. "Balancing of the heating and air-conditioning by an independent firm as required by the Specifications was not accomplished in spite of repeated requests to the Mechanical Contractor. The Cyclorama building remains over-heated and the Office building under-heated." Miscellaneous cleaning, polishing, and installation of hardware and signs in progress.
- 10 January 1962- Final inspection by architects and NPS. Building accepted contingent on completion of remaining tasks.²⁰⁰
- January 1962- NPS administrative staff move from Post Office downtown into new offices in Cyclorama Building.
- February 1962- Contractor notified about remaining defects in building including leaks on the west side of the office wing and in the roof pools and cracked glass on south side of the second floor lobby.²⁰¹ Final amount of General Contractors contract with change orders is \$736,864.96.²⁰²
- 17 March 1962- Building opened to the public.
- April-June 1962- Continued efforts to have contractor complete unfinished items and correct problems, particularly with cracked terrazzo on the lobby stair and leaking in the office wing.²⁰³
- May 1962- Cyclorama painting rehung in new gallery.
- 30 May 1962- "Mr. Myers stated that in spite of the many problems, there has been a very favorable response to the building by the public. Of course, the Cyclorama [painting] is not yet open to visitors, pending working out the spotty lighting conditions, otherwise the lighting cycle seems to operate ok."²⁰⁴
- 19 November 1962- Building dedicated by NPS Director Conrad Wirth.

²⁰⁰Letter, James Myers to Orndorff Construction Co., (29 January 1962), Folder 13, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

²⁰¹Letter, S.G. Sollenberger, Acting Superintendent, to Orndorff Construction Co., (27 February 1962), Folder 13, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

²⁰²Lump Sum Contract, General Construction - Gettysburg Visitor Center & Cyclorama, (20 February 1962), Folder 13, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

²⁰³See correspondence in Folder 13, Box 4, Series I, GETT 41097, GNMP Archives.

²⁰⁴Letter, Thaddeus Longstreth to Dion Neutra, (30 May 1962), Folder 009.560, Box 13, Longstreth Papers, UP enn.

APPENDIX II: HISTORIC IMAGES

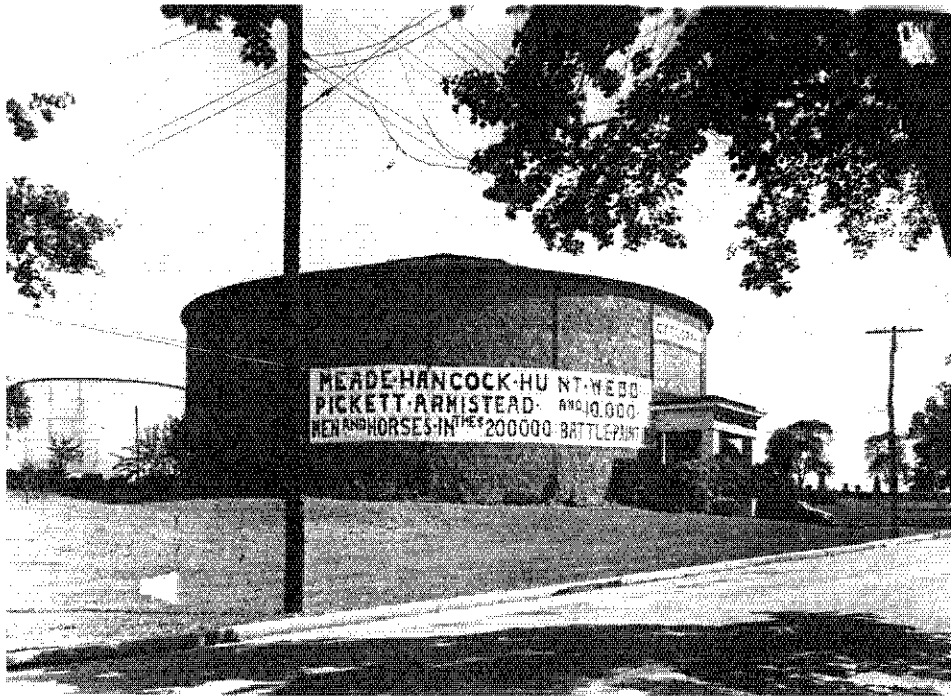


Figure 1: View of old Cyclorama Building, c. 1942.
Source: Photograph 3C-3036, Box 39, General Photographic Collection, GNMP Archives.

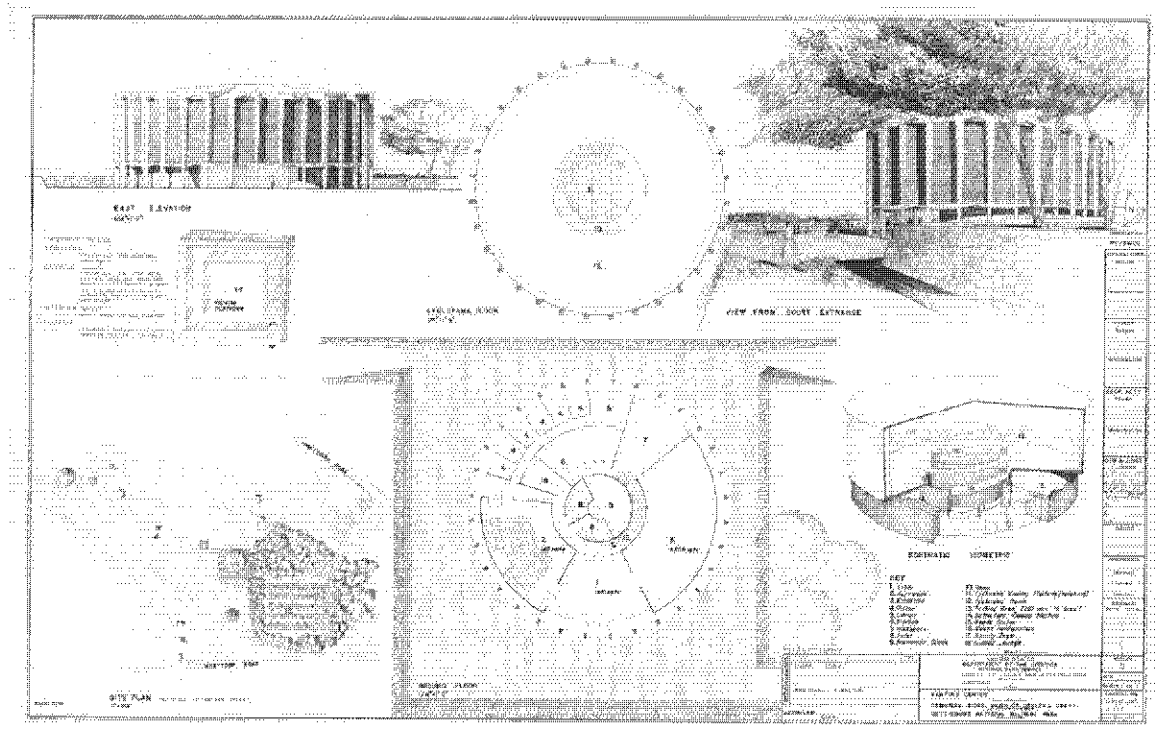


Figure 2: Preliminary drawing for Gettysburg Visitor Center, National Park Service, February 1957.
Source: NPS, Technical Information Center, Denver Service Center.

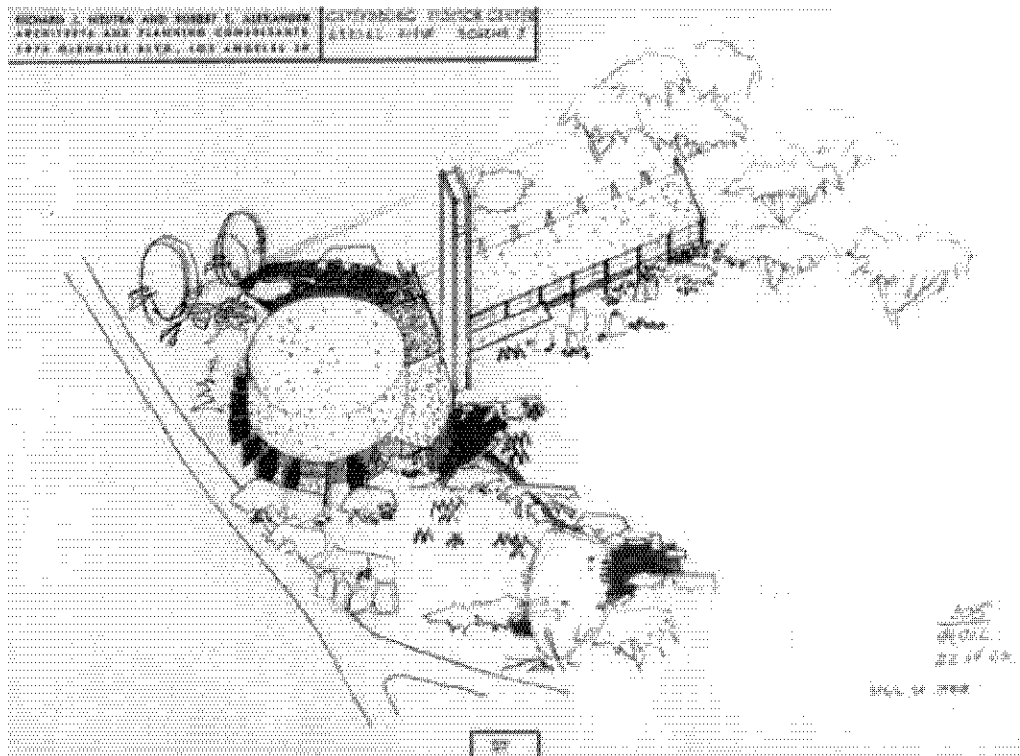


Figure 3: Neutra and Alexander design for Gettysburg Visitor Center, April 1958.
Source: NPS, Technical Information Center, Denver Service Center.

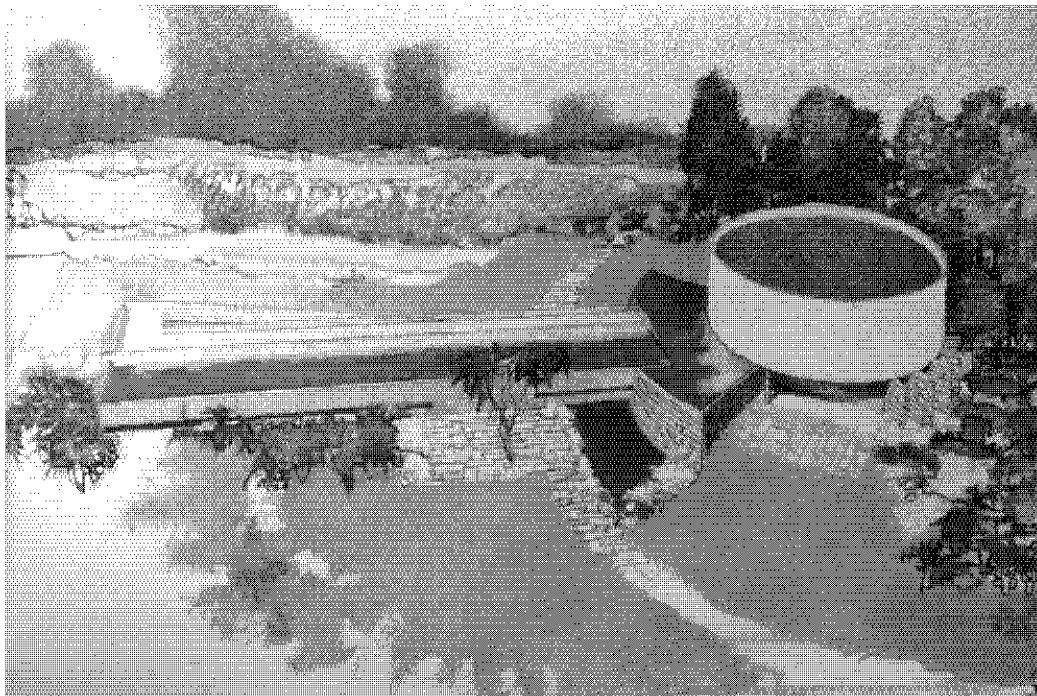


Figure 4: Rendering of East Elevation, Neutra and Alexander, 1959.
Source: NPS, Technical Information Center, Denver Service Center.

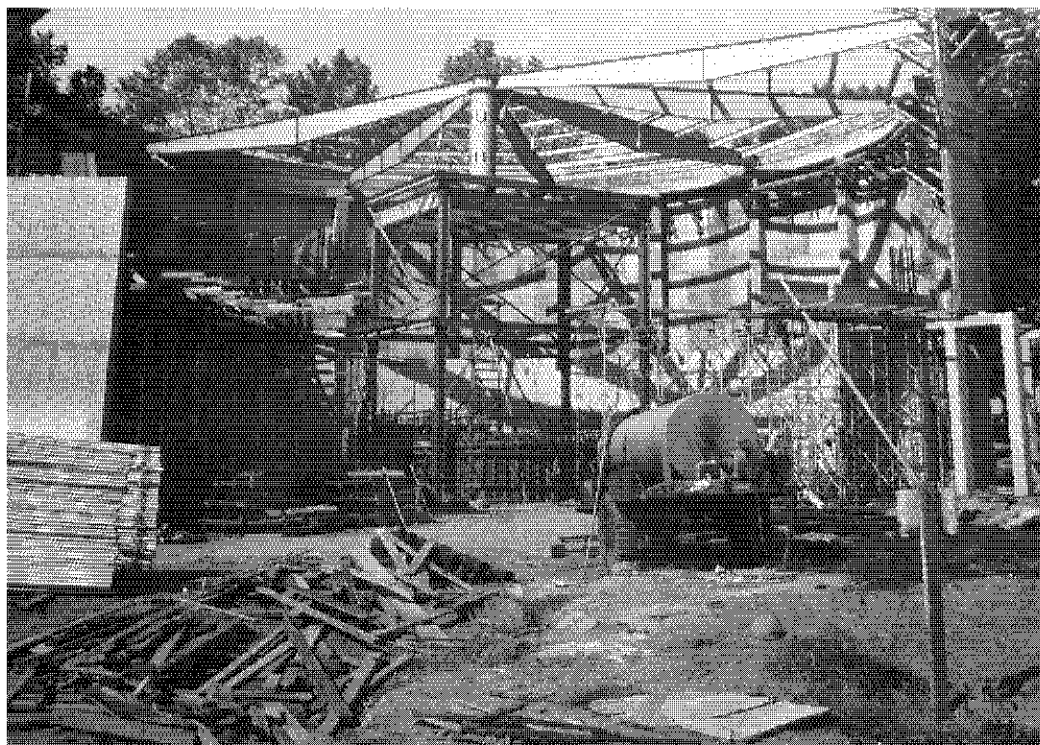


Figure 5: Construction view, rotunda half complete, c. June 1960.
Source: Photograph 26S-1009, Box 104, General Photographic Collection, GNMP Archives.

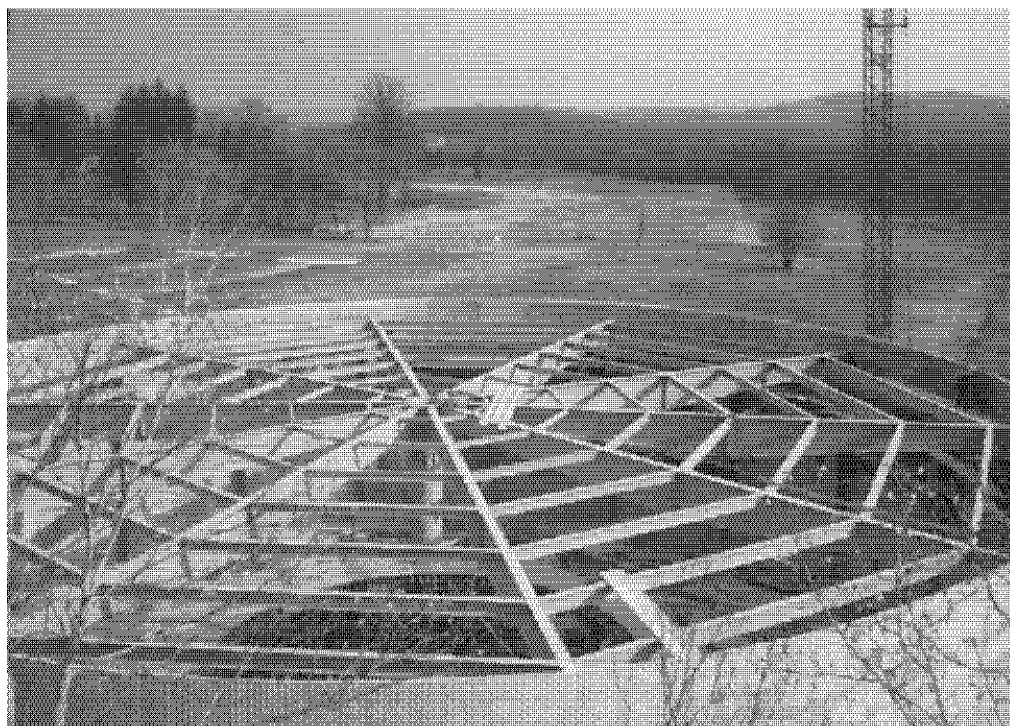


Figure 6: Construction view, rotunda steelwork in place, December 1960.
Source: Photograph 26S-165, Box 29, General Photographic Collection, GNMP Archives.

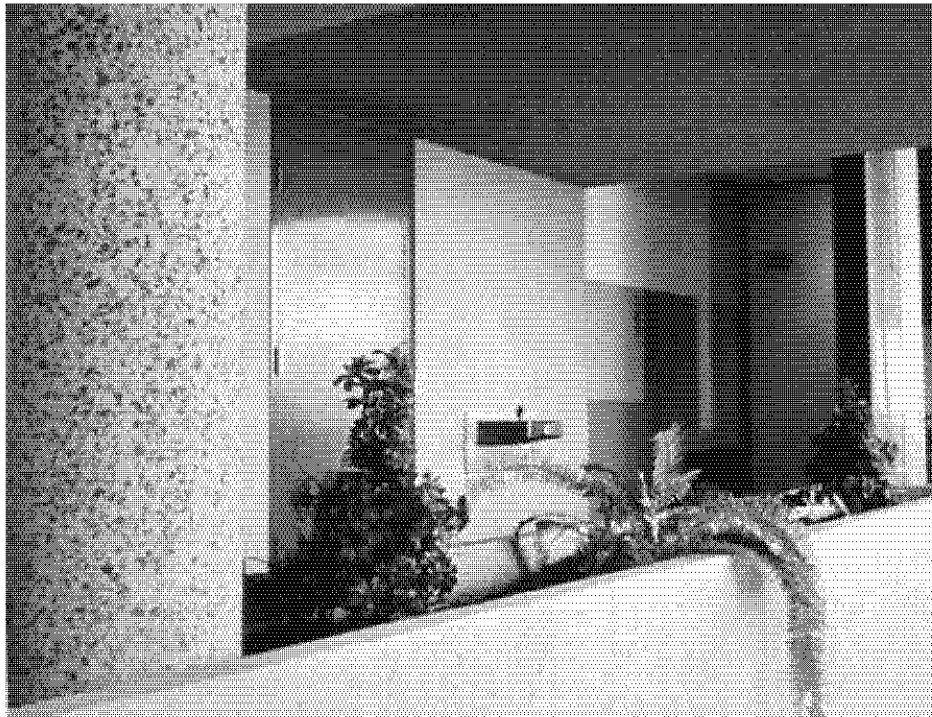


Figure 7: "Color block" paint scheme in second floor lobby, c. 1962.
Source: Thaddeus Longstreth Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania



Figure 8: Richard Neutra on overlook deck, 1961. Note test area of Thoroseal in background.
Source: Thaddeus Longstreth Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania

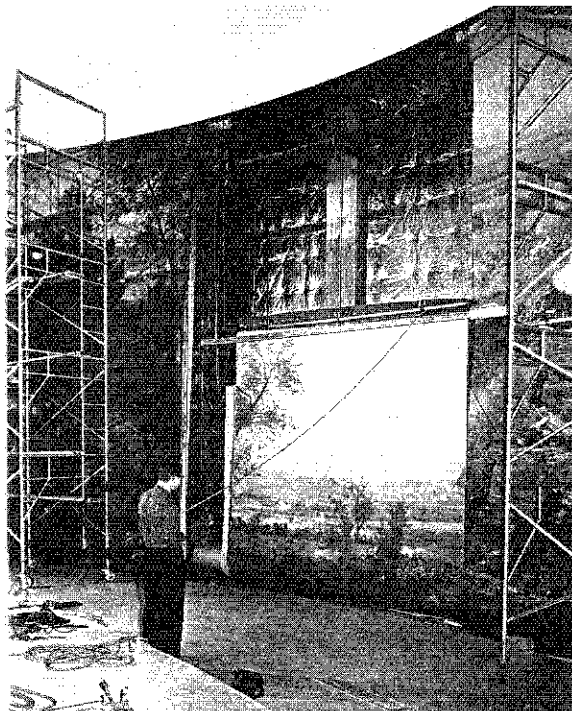


Figure 9: Installing the Cyclorama painting.
Source: Photograph 3C-3025, Box 39, General Photographic Collection, GNMP Archives.

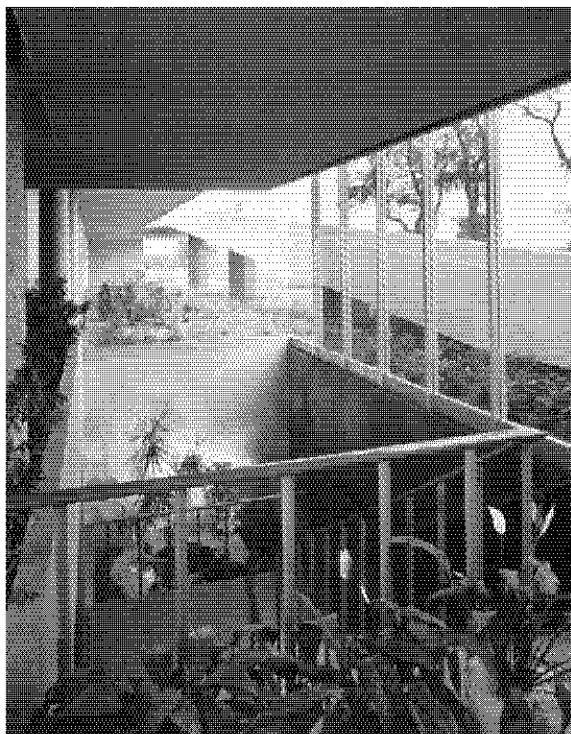


Figure 10: View looking southwest from second floor lobby to exterior ramp.
Source: Thaddeus Longstreth Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania



Figure 11: View of window wall in rostrum area open, c. 1962.
Source: Thaddeus Longstreth Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania